# FROM LEIPZIG TO CABUL:

An Account of my Motor-cycle Ride to Afghanistan and my Nine Months' Imprisonment in that Country

*By*

G. STRATIL-SAUER

Translated by Frederic Whyte

WITH FRONTISPIECE
AND FORTY-SEVEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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# TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IN a Foreword to the original German edition of this book Dr. Stratil-Sauer explains that in it he has restricted himself to an account of his personal experiences and adventures in the course of his journey, the results of his scientific studies and investigations being published separately.

In this English version, with the author's approval, I have occasionally condensed the text a little, notably in Chapters I and II.

F. W.

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# FROM LEIPZIG TO CABUL

## CHAPTER I

### MY PREPARATIONS

("A geographer, aged thirty, I contemplate setting out next autumn on a journey from Leipzig to Afghanistan"—thus opened a long letter which Dr. Stratil-Sauer addressed to an Austrian Count in May, 1924. The author was forming a committee of sympathisers to help him to cope with the financial side of his proposed expedition, and he was anxious to persuade his distinguished correspondent to become a member of it. In this he succeeded.

Chapter I of this book in its original German edition begins with the full text of the letter in question, many passages in which would require elaborate annotation were they to be translated here. A sentence or two from it will suffice. Having told how, not long before, he had been present at a lecture in which a Leipzig professor had given a very fascinating and thrilling description of adventures in the forests of Sumatra, the author proceeds: "That occasion made me realize painfully the needs of the rising generation of German students. Almost all our teachers had been able in their youth to acquire knowledge by personal experiences, whereas we (some of us the future professors of the universities) had been restricted to the study of books and maps. We should be like prayer-mills, grinding out mechanically what others had felt and uttered!"

It was after listening to this lecture, and reflecting thus upon the lamentable way in which the German scholastic world was being impoverished, that Dr. Stratil-Sauer decided to give his contemporaries a lead. We shall now learn how the motor-cycle came into the project.—*Translator's Note.*)

MY letter to the Count was my first tentative step out of the realm of dreams into the realm of actuality. One is apt to regard as ominous for the future of any undertaking the answer given by the Fates to one's first move. I received a favourable reply!

Spurred on by this success, I applied next to the Leipzig Fair for their support. In an interview with one of the

directors, Dr. Köhler, I offered to act as travelling agent, to distribute propagandist publications, to get into touch with the Fair's representatives at important places on my route, and to send home reports from the remote regions through which I should be passing.

The way in which Dr. Köhler received me, listening to me in silence with a smiling face, led me to speak more and more eagerly and to set forth more and more ardently the advantage of my offer. When I ended, he declared he was ready to become a member of my committee. I owe it to his warm support that the Board of Directors of the Leipzig Fair accepted my offer and voted me a sum that covered about a twenty-fifth part of the estimated cost of my proposed three years' journey.

The other four-and-twenty parts were still wanting! However, so far my efforts had been successful. The Geographical Society of Leipzig and some prominent persons now gave me recommendations and I began to feel I had grounds for looking to the future with smiling optimism.

There now began for me a time of feverish activity. I fixed up an office. Letters were prepared explaining the scientific and commercial objects of my journey; my projects for advertising in foreign lands and canvassing for orders were set forth in writing; proposed agreement forms and letters of recommendation were manifolded, and finally each letter was to be accompanied by a coloured map of Asia, marked with my projected route. I wrote to hundreds of German firms offering to work for them in return for a supply of samples and a small payment.

I had worked for weeks at these tasks. Then came a great calm which I hoped would prove only a brief prelude to the storm! But quite a long period passed before the first answers came. They were few in number, and they were refusals.

I waited awhile, with persistent patience and hope. Each day the postman brought me three or four business envelopes. In curt, practical terms, and with expressions of "sincere regret," or with advice suggesting, in a superior tone, that I had better abandon my project, the writers all refused. At last came the first commission with a sample of cigars.

I breathed again. New addresses were collected, fresh proposals sent out. Once more most of those to whom I wrote left me without a reply, and again the letters of refusal came fluttering in. But gradually there arrived a few commissions. After four weeks I summed up the result of my efforts. What had I got to handle? Tinned sausages, shaving gear, penholders, collars, screws, a suit of clothes, a hammock, knives, a gramophone, braces and neckties. With many of these articles there was obviously very little to be done in the East. Others again promised very small results, on account of their trifling value, even with a good sale. In cash down in advance I had hardly got anything. But with photographic material I had some surprising luck. The Mentor Company promised me a reflex camera, for which the firm of Zeiss provided the lens. Then followed from the Dresden firm of that name an "Ica" cinema apparatus, and a few days later the Agfa works sent me a fine supply of plates and films. I was thus fitted out with German photographic equipment of the best quality. Again and again during my journey I had the pleasure of finding what good results could be obtained with this apparatus, even under the most unfavourable circumstances.

Again there followed a period of fruitless waiting. At last, in the midst of more refusals, there came a ray of light. The firm of Schietrumpf at Jena sent me some excellent scales, measuring tapes and a clinometer as samples, which I was also free to use for my geographical surveying, and the Lambrecht works of Göttingen entrusted me with meteorological instruments with which I did good work as far as

Afghanistan. Then came the most precious object in all my collection, a theodolite, given me by the firm of Sartorius.

Then again all was still for a while. I was getting tired of sending out fresh letters without any result. But once more I had a pleasant experience, when a firm which could not engage me to handle their goods, sent me twenty marks as a free donation to my project! And then finally everything came to a dead stop.

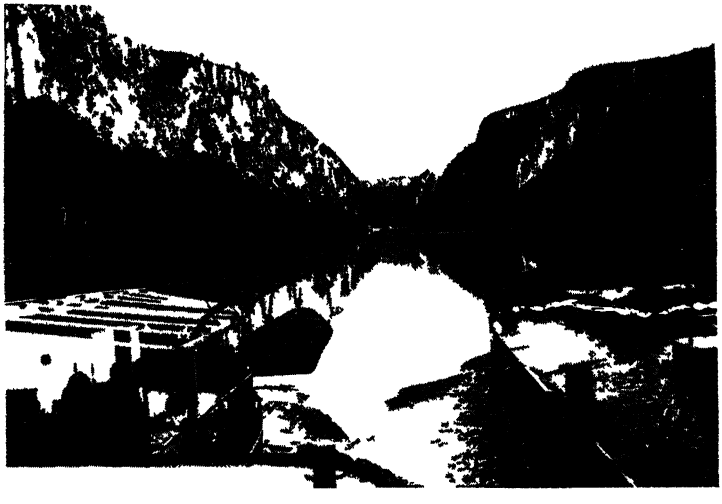
The results down to this point were altogether inadequate and it seemed hopeless to make any more efforts in connection with business, while there was evidently no money to be expected from the scientific institutions I had applied to. Should I have to abandon my journey? No, some way must be found!

I decided to send a circular letter to the newspapers. I set forth my plans anew, and offered to act as a special correspondent. This time there began a regular downpour of replies. Unfortunately, at first they came not from the newspapers but from their readers, whose interest had been aroused by Press allusions to my plans. Some of these letters contained warnings, others good advice—but most of the writers wanted to go with me. There were soldiers, typists, photographers, artists, ex-officials, waitresses, porters and even a night watchman, "with a dog that could bite but was well trained." They all wanted to take part in my expedition. I might have been fitting out a crusade!

But from the newspapers I received refusals. Each of them had its own correspondents in foreign countries. Often they were men whose names, well known to fame, my mere honest goodwill could not outweigh. So, once more, some new way had to be found.

But I did not know where to turn. The continual ups and downs, the everlasting awaking and abandonment of my hopes, had left me wearied and discouraged. Sadly, one evening, I was turning over the letters of refusal that now

VIEW OF PASSAU



WHERE THE DANUBE PIERCES THE BANAT MOUNTAINS

filled five portfolios. How well I knew all their various tones—the flat rejection, the fatherly admonition, the polite regret. But among them I found a reply from a small newspaper, which said my offer might have been at once accepted, if only it were rendered attractive to the newspaper-reading public by some sort of sensational feature. I quite saw the point of this. Sensationalism, however, was out of my line. Suddenly an idea occurred to me. Could not I set up some kind of a new "record" in connection with my journey? I had already amused myself with sport, but had never had any idea of engaging in the enthusiastic pursuit of it as a candidate for prizes and championships. No matter! I would see what I could do!

I made up my mind to approach a German motor manufacturing firm with the proposal that it should let me have a machine for a journey into Asia that would serve as an advertisement for their motors. I set myself to investigate the question whether the route I had in mind could be traversed by a motor-cycle, and I came to the conclusion that, though my plan might be difficult, it was feasible.

So I applied to the "Wanderer" Motor Works at Chemnitz, which produced motor-cycles that seemed to be well adapted for my purpose, and I put before the firm a form of agreement by which I would bind myself to make the journey to Afghanistan within a fixed period of time, while they were to supply me with a motor-cycle and pay me a premium on the completion of my task.

Though I hardly ventured to count upon success, they agreed. What was a wonder to me was that these helpful friends—as I felt strongly on that very day and now know to be the fact—entered into my plans without much faith in my being able to realize them, and almost entirely out of a sympathetic recognition of my good will and my big aspirations. In my mind this enhanced immensely the value of their alliance. Any other firm would probably have felt, as they

did, that my attempt would end in failure, and would have taken good care not to make a useless sacrifice.

What luck it was that I approached the Wanderer firm with my proposal! Even if they had refused me and I had got a cycle elsewhere, I am absolutely persuaded that my expedition would have inevitably ended in failure. During the whole of my journey the "Wanderer" cycle proved to be, in the first place, light enough—I would never have got a heavier machine over thousands of awkward places; secondly, it was strong enough; a less powerful machine would never have surmounted the many steep passes I had to conquer. Finally, it was a machine of exceptionally good quality, equal to all the difficulties with which I met. After my worse mishap, a fall of some thirty feet into a gully, it still survived!

The proposed "record ride,"—"With a Motor-Cycle to Afghanistan,"—as it was now to be announced, gave me the "sensational" element required for the Press. Once more I sent out my letters to the German papers, and this time I got engagements. Six newspapers took me on as their special correspondent. I had made a good step forward.

I also put before the Chamber of Commerce a request to be empowered as their corresponding representative. That of Leipzig was of material assistance to me. That of Essen also gave me a commission.

Meanwhile the summer was drawing to a close, and I saw that I had no time to waste on probably useless attempts to obtain further financial support. So I got ready for the start. I had found an excellent travelling companion, who would assist me in my geographical work and act as my interpreter in Turkey, in the person of a Bulgarian student at Leipzig University, Anastas Beschkov. He arranged to be ready to join me in Bulgaria and travel with me through the Turkish dominions to the Russian frontier. Beschkov proved to be an unselfish and always helpful comrade.

Whilst I was waiting to obtain through the Foreign Office

a visa for my passport for all the countries on my proposed route, and for letters of introduction from Austria and Hungary, and permits from the Turkish and Afghan Governments to carry out geographical work in their territories, I used the time to take runs on the cycle and get some practical training in mechanics in the workshops. At the last moment the Wanderer Company raised a difficulty; they could not let me have a motor-cycle for such a journey unless I had a side-car to go with it. Was my whole plan to go to pieces after all? But once more I was lucky. I got my side-car, a very good one, from the Anfa works at Dessau.

The opening of the Leipzig Fair now gave me a chance of replenishing my purse.

I can smile now when I recall my unwearying pilgrimage from stall to stall, again and again producing my letters of recommendation, explaining my route and making my proposals for a business agency and a supply of samples. But it was a painful experience at the time. Hundreds refused me, and the list of samples which I drew up at home, on the last evening, filled only a single page of paper. My collection was made up of brushes, two pair of spectacles, a sewing machine, boots, two lanterns, a cloak, a cash-box, a blanket, a pistol, a clock, three pairs of sock-suspenders and a coat-hanger!

The Fair closed. The crowd of stall-holders scattered in all directions. Now there was nothing more to be had. It was time for me to concentrate on my scientific plans. There were gaps in the maps of Eastern Asia Minor, and further on there were wide tracts of country not yet thoroughly explored or even visited by Europeans.

Meanwhile September went by. The necessary papers had arrived. The boxes were packed. A trial trip severely tested the cycle, laden with a weight of some 800 pounds.

Of money there was a balance of about 3000 marks, after providing fully for my equipment. I left half of this sum

with my Committee. The other half, with my account book, was packed in my baggage.

Then came a cool autumn morning, the sixth of October, and the day of my departure.

I was to accomplish—what the times had granted to so few in our impoverished post-war Germany—an expedition—a real expedition, not just a journey from one town to another.

I set out on my way. Whither would it lead me ?

## CHAPTER II

### ON THE WAY TO THE EAST

IN the light of the early morning on that October day I rode through the familiar streets of Leipzig, and the feeling that I was bidding them farewell for an unknown period seemed to lend a new charm to them. At Chemnitz I said good-bye to the directors of the Wanderer Works. They inspected the heavily-laden cycle with some anxious shakings of the head, and sent me off with more good wishes on their part than high hopes!

At Ratisbon I reached the Danube, which was to be the first stage of my actual journey eastwards. Then I pushed on by well-known ways—by Passau, Linz, Wachau, Krems and the Kahlenberg to Vienna. Oh, how glad I was to see Vienna again!

During these days I had been trying to shake off a bad chill. It developed into such a severe attack of fever that I had to spend some days in my room at an hotel—this in Vienna, where a thousand memories of my life there as a student were luring me out of doors! I lay restless till late in the nights, listening to the music of violins, Danubian waltzes, and Viennese songs, that came from the café below, dulled by distance and amid the clatter of plates and dishes and the hum of voices.

On my recovery I left Vienna by way of the Kahlenberg. With a last salute to the spires of St. Stephen's Cathedral, I sped along again towards the East, moving away from the Danube into the Burgenland and to the Neusiedler Lake.

By a narrow timber track between beds of reeds, spreading wide over its banks, at last I reached its margin, and the broad stretch of its waters opened before me. Beyond, like a dull-coloured border to it, glimmered the hills of Ruszt. It was the hour between twilight and night, that sets one thinking of home. There was still light upon the lake, but the shadows were deepening and widening upon its surface, while a dull greyness came over the land.

At the new frontier line by the lake three soldiers, in the old Austro-Hungarian uniform, challenged me. When, in reply to their questions, I gave them my name and added "*német barátom*," they shook hands, all smiles, with the "German friend." A foreigner is sure of a welcome in Hungary, and if he can speak even a few Magyar words he will have a still more hearty reception. There is, indeed, no nation that loves its native language more than the Magyars, and amongst whom any attempt by a foreigner to speak it is so gratefully welcomed and understood.

Along the Hungarian roads there is a string of the settlements of German immigrants of old times. They push eastwards, not as conquerors, but as colonists seeking for room to live. These country folk from Suabia kept at first to their old German ways, but as their numbers increased their close-built villages expanded; narrow lanes gave way to broad roads with banks shadowed by trees, and here and there dividing to pass round churches and chapels. The last town with a German aspect is Raab. At Raab, although one already hears a foreign language spoken, one feels a homely sense of being in an old German city with its cathedral, market-place and wall. But amongst poor little tile-roofed cottages the clumsy half-modern colossal buildings in the centre of the place make a strange note of discord. This is typical of Hungary's development. The old Magyar settlers were pushed outwards as the German element became dominant in the centre of their land. But, when German

ideals were abandoned by the Hapsburgs at the Court of Vienna, the national policy of Austria sacrificed the German cities of Hungary to the Magyar development. While the Suabian peasants still clung to their homely ways, the strange new buildings in these old German settlements proclaimed the victory of Magyardom.

Then I pushed on through a land of pastures, full of herds of swine, with acacia trees along the broad road, to a range of hills with once more German villages. Through their well-kept streets, in the evenings, the girls in long rows, hand in hand, rambled singing their songs.

And then with a marked distinctive note of its own came Buda-Pest. Two hundred years ago it was still in the grasp of Asia, on the border of the European world, near the river and yet not of it. It has now become the heart of the Danube lands. It owes its rank as a capital to its central position at the intersection of natural lines of traffic, and at the best crossing between the two plains of Hungary. But it owes its renown as a noble example of a modern city to the propitious moment at which its rebuilding began. For the Magyars, on obtaining their national freedom, were able to concentrate their energies on Buda-Pest, and had learned how to develop the possibilities of business traffic that its advantageous position suggested. The new capital was soon to dominate the country and become its centre of activity. And about the same time modern engineering science had bridled the river at the Iron Gates, so that the navigation and trade of the Danube had considerably increased in value. The coming splendour of Buda-Pest now depended on its river. Not encircling boulevards and wide squares as in the case of Vienna, but the Danube itself, spanned by six stately bridges, is the distinctive feature of the city.

When in the last century Buda-Pest's new buildings came into existence its architects were not hampered by having to adapt themselves to some set fashion of a traditional historic

style. Here the style of the buildings is not a mere imitation of a past, as in the Danube cities of the Balkan lands. Nor do we find the architects trying their hands at experimental novelties as in the modern West.

During my stay in Buda-Pest such convincing arguments against a cycling journey through Rumania were put before me that I decided on going down the Danube on a steamship. It was already so late in the year that all the passenger steamers were laid up for the winter ; but with the help of the German Embassy I succeeded in securing a passage on a tug-boat that was to tow eight cargo-laden barges down the river. I took advantage of the days before it was to start on its voyage to make an excursion to Hungary's great lake, the Platten See.

It was here that my motor-cycle came to grief for the first time, being badly damaged between the Scylla and Charybdis of shying horses and the ditch beside the road. My excursion ended in a dreary journey back to Buda-Pest by rail. At the repairing shop the promise was made to me that the machine, as soon as it was put right, would be forwarded by rail to Varna, so that I would find it ready for me on my arrival ; I could not wait for it, because next day my voyage down the Danube began. We soon made friends on board—the Captain, grown grey in the service on the river, a cheery South German acting as his mate, and a young Rhinelander, who meant, with the help of his songs and trust in God, to make a journey on foot from Constantinople to India—and myself.

In long-drawn monotony the second stage of my journey dragged on to its end. There were mornings when we waited patiently while the heavy autumn fog kept the steamer long at anchor ; days when the scenery glided by in constant repetition like a strip of film one unrolls between one's hands ; pleasant evenings when the Captain spun his amusing yarns ; and nights full of poetry, when the river banks seemed to sleep in darkness and silence and there was only a soft murmur of the stream, as it rippled around our anchor chains

SNOW CLAD TREBIZOND

Two features characterized the scenery. At first, on the right, there was a steep bank chiefly of rain-furrowed loess that barred all view beyond it. Then on the left extended the endless broad levels of the Hungarian plain, with its lonely heaths, rough well-heads, and tumble-down peasant huts. But often a belt of thick, creeper-tangled woods cut off the plain from the river. Then there were times when a mantle of dark woodlands spread on both sides of the river. Amid the thick tangle of green there would be a wilderness where no hunter pursued his sport, and still backwaters slept with countless islands, where no fisherman spread his nets. Only the eagles are lords of this region. They gathered in dozens on the white banks of river gravel, stretched their mighty wings and sunned themselves.

After passing the old fortress of Erdbut, the first Turkish ruin we saw by the river, there is another reminder of Germany in the villages of Suabian settlers built along a broad central street and fitting well into the landscape, though the belt of vineyards and maize and hop-fields around them is in strong contrast with the grey heathlands beyond. Then comes the change to the Magyar riverside villages, planned on the lines of a chessboard. The towns alternate between these two types. But at Mohacs the middle of the place is a crowded huddle of narrow streets. Half the dealers there hide away their wares in European fashion in their gloomy shops, the other half display them in Eastern fashion out in the open. There are signs of modernity about some of the new business houses, though these show a curious mingling of local and national and Western European ideas. The main streets still reveal traces of the old German influence. Nearly all the eastern Danubian towns are on the steep bank on the right, but where the left bank affords firm ground one finds examples of double towns, one on each side of the river, each having its own distinctive life.

Then comes the most striking note, the most impressive

experience of our voyage, at the Iron Gates of the Danube. The prelude to it begins as we pass Belgrade. The leafy woods along the river, showing now more and more traces of the ravage of storms, gradually give way to irregular thickets of low-growing bush. The hills along the river-side rise higher; mountain ranges, first seen afar, draw nearer to the stream and at last close in upon it, so that at times the river has to find a way through them. The supreme moment comes when one sees the Danube breaking through the mountains of the Banat. Here and there, for a brief interval, the river widens a little and gives more breathing space, but mostly its course follows a long, narrow pass in which the rocky precipices to right and left threaten to choke the stream. The overhanging heights go sheer down into the water, and rise sheer above it to level summits hundreds of feet above the stream. High aloft birch trees redden with their autumn leaves, maples are aglow, and there is the bright colour of the beeches. Below, the water foams and whirls over the rocks. Here passage ways have been blasted and embanked in the midst of the river to facilitate its navigation, but nevertheless the water pours so swiftly through the last of these canals that as we pass out it looks as if it would overwhelm our little steamer.

Are not those men fishing over there wearing the fez? We are nearing "the East." From barge to barge the word is passed that the river wall of the new Szecheny road is broken down here, and there can be no stoppage for the landing on that road. Orsova seems to give us one more reminder of life in Germany, for it has a German market, there are German sign-boards and the people in its streets speak German. But the stagey elegance of the Rumanian upper class—officers with rouged cheeks and an eyeglass stuck in one eye, and gaily-dressed ladies in painful contrast with the tattered poverty all around them—is a foretaste of the Levantine aspects of the Bosphorus. Ada Kaleh, an island

in the Danube below the town, displays amongst scattered poplars and ruins of its old fortifications a mosque with minarets and some dilapidated little two-storied houses with wooden-latticed Turkish windows. The picture of old Turkey is hardly in keeping with its surroundings. It looks like a forgotten remnant of the receding East.

Slowly the contrast between East and West becomes more and more marked. The banks continue steep on the right, and level lands again border the stream on the left. But a melancholy atmosphere overshadows it all. Meadows with clumps of wood are replaced by stretches of wretched pasture-land, and even these sometimes fail. Then again on the left appear pasture lands with reed-built huts and draw-wells, over which a bitterly cold north-east wind is sweeping as if it would uproot the few trees. It is a wretched stretch of low land with further off a terrace of cultivated ground. The precipitous river banks on the right are absolutely bare and treeless.

As we move down-stream the river becomes a wide zone, spreading out between its far-off banks in an immensity of side channels and backwaters, shadowed by rows of poplars. Here is the home of millions of waterfowl, which get their living from the shallower pools and backwaters, which every new rise of the river fills with fish. One sees at rare intervals on the left a little isolated settlement, far from the marshy river margin, and without the central landmark of a church tower.

At the beginning of this last stage of our river voyage is Turnu-Severin, a town built in Eastern fashion. Its streets do not converge on a central square but branch off from one long main avenue, where the people—but in Eastern fashion the men only—seem to spend the live-long day sitting in the sun in front of the cafés. On the right another street branches off, with rows of shops, the first "bazaar" on our route. There are quantities of furs and skins and holiday

clothes, embroidered with silver thread, heaped up in variegated confusion on both sides of the often crowded thoroughfare. A modern theatre here seems strangely out of accord with its surroundings—perhaps it has lately been built out of German reparation payments.

Lom, the Danube port for Sofia, is a town of much the same type, but its Eastern aspect is more accentuated, for we see the Turkish women of Bulgaria, unveiled indeed, but carefully muffled in their white mantles, mingling in the streets with the Bulgarian women. The Eastern note is still more marked at Nicopolis, where the Turkish element is the most numerous in the population, and there are reminders of the Bulgarian war of independence in the ruins of the palace of Orechovo, with what were formerly the baths of the Pasha's harem.

At Rustchuk, where Beschkov was awaiting me, I ended my voyage with the string of river barges to travel by railway to Varna. At Rustchuk, not so long ago, stood the ranges of quarantine barracks that for years helped to keep the plague out of Europe. Now whole rows of Eastern buildings are being ruthlessly demolished to make way for new lines of streets, with large, half-modern edifices. There is something of a startling brutality in this penetration of the new Europe into old Rustchuk, for the new ways pay no regard to those of the older time. So one sometimes sees a considerable difference of level between the new and the old streets, which cross each other with long rows of rough steps connecting them. At Razgrad, which lies at some distance from the Danube, and is thus almost untouched by the current of modernity, we spent a night with some Bulgarian friends. While we slept comfortably in a big bed, our friends contented themselves with a simple bivouac on the floor—such is Oriental hospitality!

At Varna the European stages of my journey came to an end. Though no German influence from the West has

penetrated so far, Varna shows only scanty features of an Eastern city. Foreign influences from the north-east, and its position on the sea, have given this important port of Bulgaria an aspect of industrial activity and modern life. All over the place one has the impression of eagerness for new developments. The port, with its quays, lighthouse, and breakwaters, shows clearly the contours of up-to-date modernity, but in the town itself there is still much mingling of new and old and not a few discordant contrasts, as, for instance, when from broad modern streets one turns at once into Eastern lanes with the narrow dirty-looking fronts of their wooden houses leaning over them. But more especially the visitor from Central Europe has an unpleasing impression of the crude mixture of styles in the new buildings. There seems to be a special partiality for reviving the "style of the company promoter." Where neither the space nor the funds available are sufficient for a great display there are attempts at decoration on a limited scale, but there are also buildings with colossal façades, gables overladen with ornament, statues in whose upraised hands burn red and green incandescent lights. Thus with all the abundance of its new buildings, Varna has no style or taste, while its old Turkish quarter, which keeps to the ancient ways despite its poverty, gives a greater impression of stable character and artistic feeling because it has a stamp of its own.

Beside the harbour quay the steamship *Varna* was rising on a stormy swell, while the waves were sending bursts of white foam over the lofty breakwaters. While Beschkov was to remain for a few days in the town waiting for our motor-cycle, which of course had not yet arrived there, I went on to Constantinople. After a rough night voyage, the steamer reached Burgas. Varna has a past, but Burgas has a future, for it is the port for the tobacco trade, and, thanks to the wide region from which it draws its supplies, it will soon have got well in advance of the old port of the

wheat trade, which has lost to Rumania the Dobrudja that used to be its busiest hinterland. Reconstruction has begun at Burgas and is making inroads upon its Eastern aspect, and the contrasts are here even more abrupt than at Varna, but the type of building that has been here hit upon, the many-windowed Greek house, with its four gables, lends itself easily to European adaptation, and it is certainly a success.

# CHAPTER III

## IN TREBIZOND AND ALONG THE COAST OF THE BLACK SEA

I HAD to wait almost six weeks in Constantinople until the motor-cycle came on from Buda-Pest. But this time was very usefully employed. I made some progress with Turkish and Russian; I went for an excursion to Angora, where I obtained a permit for my journey through East Pontus and some introductions which would help me in my studies there; I busied myself on behalf of the people in Germany who had given me commissions; and I wrote some articles in order to add to my funds. In addition, I found time to wander at will through the city, the marvels of which years of investigation would not exhaust. Angora, until so recently a miserable village in the wilds of Anatolia, is the embodiment of a strong Will, the Will of an awakened Nation; Constantinople, the rich brilliantly-coloured Babel, transcends any single conception, any single formula. Only bit by bit does one learn to perceive the dualism which underlies all the thousand graduating shades of its existence, its mingling of innumerable elements—the dualism of Pera and Galata: Pera, with its spring-tide of stone sky-scrapers, European through and through, with its Levantines entirely lacking in culture but proud of their semi-civilization; and Stamboul—together with its suburb across the Bosphorus, Scutari—a maze of narrow alleys and studded with mosques, Oriental in every detail, with its ramshackle wooden houses, its old ruins and heaps of debris from quite recent fires all higgledy-

piggledy, side by side. . . . A bridge between Europe and Asia, and in itself typifying the two continents—such is the twin-city of Pera and Stamboul.

It was not until early in January, accompanied by Beschkov, who had now rejoined me, that I embarked on the steamer for Trebizond with the motor-cycle and our baggage. To the south shimmered the Marmora, its smooth surface broken by the sharp outlines of Princes Islands. But our course was to the north.

By sun-down the wide expanse of the Black Sea lay before us. Our boat was not now moving smoothly as on the Bosphorus, but was being rocked this way and that by dark waves which broke in the distance in long lines of white foam against the steep, cliff-like shore. These cliffs descend so precipitously into the sea that the steamer is able to run its course quite close to the land. Here and there we could discern signs of life, a solitary house, a fishing boat at its moorings, at rare intervals a village. On and on we steamed, passing mountain after mountain, range upon range of mountains of every imaginable shape, but all alike in their covering of green thickets on their lower slopes and in their snow-covered peaks. Thus whole days and nights went by. The only perceptible change in the unending monotony was that the snow, which at first divided the summits with such mathematical precision into sections of white and green, began gradually to keep to loftier and loftier heights, and vegetation and forms of life became more evident. Thus were we made aware of our approach to our destination, the sacred Colchis.

My first impressions of Trebizond were spoilt by prosaic preoccupations; I had to wrangle with shameless boatmen over the money to be paid for conveying my motor-cycle and side-car ashore, and I experienced a thousand agonies as I watched their transhipment and their transport to the hotel which had been recommended to me. And the reflection bore

THE EAST PONTUS MOUNTAIN RANGE NEAR TREBIZOND

itself in on me alarmingly that I had reached a land where for months to come I should not hear a word of German spoken. But I had no sooner begun to superintend the unloading of my effects, addressing the hotel-keeper in rather rusty French, than he astonished me by replying: "Won't you keep to your mother-tongue? I am a German-Russian!" And at the same moment a boy came rushing down the hotel-steps, followed by a gentleman with a beard, and exclaiming in German: "Father, a motor-cycle has come!" And that same evening I was able to celebrate in company with the German engineer the founding of a German colony in Trebizond!

Apart from some short rides to explore the vicinity, our first two days were devoted to the business of unpacking my possessions—the first thing to be done before we could make our fresh start. Tired out by the labour involved in this, we were enjoying a well-earned sleep in our north-western room when in the middle of the night a sharp clatter made us spring from our beds: a violent gust of wind had blown in our window and to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning outside, drifts of icy-cold snow swept in upon our summery quarters!

The following day brought no change in the weather; the storm raged uninterruptedly, while new masses of snow-clouds came sailing along from the north-west. For fifteen years Trebizond had not experienced such weather. Ships were dashed against the shores, caravans were buried in the snow, all deliveries of posts and goods came to a stand-still, so that some difficulties were experienced in respect to the food supply of the town. Our colony, however, had grown suddenly to stately proportions, for on the latest steamer to arrive two German ladies had come from Constantinople and a honeymoon couple from Leipzig who were now compelled against their will to make a halt. So we hobnobbed together, shivering a little but all in very

good humour in the *salon*, the only warm room in the hotel, until at last, after a week, an east wind came along and swept the skies clear. There now came into the harbour, rolling and tossing about, the first of the ships which had taken refuge in sheltered bays along the coast, the sound of the brass bells heralded the coming of the caravans, and the inhabitants of Trebizond were able to resume again their wonted activities. The catastrophe of the bad weather was to result in delay for me, however, as all the country round lay buried in deep snow so that I could not proceed yet with my explorations and had to restrict myself to study of the town.

What is most pleasing about Trebizond is its position on the sea. It forms two curves, sloping right down to the water's edge; where they meet stands a castle, erected five hundred years ago by the Genoese. The city's charm lies in the way in which it is built, rising terrace upon terrace, up to the precipitous height of the protecting Boz Tépé, the tableland shape of which gave the town its name.[1] What is most interesting about Trebizond, however, is its double face, an imprint left by the racial history which has marked the existence of the town even in its smallest features. If you look down on Trebizond from the hill on the southern height, you can hardly disentangle the welter of small houses whose walls, white and green, scintillate in the sun, for the town slopes away obliquely from the spectator. At your feet you see huddled together a couple of poverty-stricken Turkish dwellings, wretched hovels, made of unbaked bricks and wood; rising above them is the heavy dome of a mosque, whose minarets shoot up like darts to the sky. Down below by the beach, however, rows of alien-looking Greek houses cluster round a church. Softening patches of dark green lie between the rows of sharply defined white and grey—patches of thicket and meadowland, clumps of rhododendrons and

[1] *Trapezos*, in the Greek.

hazel-bushes and pine-trees. To the left glisten the snow-clad Alps of Lasistan, reddened by the rays of the sun, and before you stretches the sea, whose horizon is still enfolded in the pale violet veil of misty Colchis. This is the view looking northwards. More fascinating is the view southwards —the view of the city from the sea. Facing you is the sun, a painted ball upon the sea, and before you rising the town, tier above tier. The sunshine suffuses the shades of the terraces and all the summits of the broad housetops are surmounted as by a halo. Here gaily-bright little Greek houses grown over by vines and with jalousied windows are to the front, some buildings in the true Genoese Renaissance style in among them—with a cathedral enthroned upon a sea-washed rock. Further back and higher up begin the Turkish houses, the mosques, and the verdure of the cemeteries. The whole resembles an incredibly beautiful dream-vision with a fantastically high horizon. On the narrow beach, however, on the black sand lie hundreds of camels, manifestations of a distant world.

The two higher strata of the town are divided almost horizontally by the breadth of two streams which isolate a narrow central region: Old Trebizond with its ruins, its damaged ramparts and decaying palace from the great days when an Emperor ruled here, before the city—the last stronghold of Asia Minor—bowed down before the Crescent.

That Trebizond, like a Janus head, should show a different face to either side, is the work of history. The city lies at the head of that primeval highway which, rising up from the sea, in the gorge of Dermenderesu, leads by the Zigana Pass to Baiburt and Erzeroum. As the most convenient route over the border mountains, the Zigana Pass attracts all the traffic which goes from north-eastern Anatolia down to the coast, and it even extends its reach to Persia, as the road from Erzeroum continues right away to Tabriz. Therefore from earliest times it tempted the sea-faring nations, the

Phœnicians, the Greeks, the Genoese, and the Venetians, to Trebizond, which grew to be a great centre of trade, while from Central Asia also the peoples flocked down to this city on the coast. If in those days it was the stronger races which gave Trebizond its distinctive character, the influence of the subject races had the effect of seeing it rise up afresh after a new victory. Hence the Levantine-Oriental mingling observable in the city of to-day.

Whoever has come along the old trade route to this emporium on the Black Sea—whether it was a tired-out army of 10,000 Greeks, or Sultan Mohammed's warrior bands, or the bronzed leader of caravans who brings thither three times a year on camels hung with bells the treasures of Persia; whether it be the Tartar country-folk of Aserbeidschan with their crops on ponderous ox-waggons, or Kurds from the southern parts of Asia Minor—all alike who come from the sun-scorched wastes of the east and the south greet the city on the sea beneath the green Pontus Wall as though they had found a Paradise. Throughout the year there is an unending procession up into the mountains, and down from them to the sea, of men of strange races, beasts from strange lands, and fellow-travellers of strange sorts; and from all these the man who has never quitted the narrow slip of garden between rock and wave derives a consciousness of the strange world beyond the mountains, the world of the deserts and the steppes.

A first effort to make my way over the moderately high promontory of Boz Tépé proved a failure. The mountain lay buried too deep in snow. Even down here, on the so-called Riviera of the Black Sea, the evergreen plants and the orange and lemon trees bend their heads beneath the burden. So I returned to the neighbourhood of the town and went up and down the streets, compass and notebook in hand, to enable me to construct a plan of this city of the two aspects. Here were wide thoroughfares, broadening out into market-places,

with the now empty houses of Greeks and Armenians ; here the narrow lanes and alleys of the Turkish quarter twisting and turning about and then, as though conscious that they have no longer any right to exist, ending suddenly in a cul-de-sac. The blending of types is, however, manifest above all in the way in which the Bazaar street goes down from the centre of the town to the waterside and does not serve as the main street of traffic as in purely Oriental cities.

The measuerments and notes which I made during the day were turned to account at night on my large-scale plan. The more my work absorbed me, the more suspicious grew the officials, to whom my activities were so entirely incomprehensible that at last they came to the conclusion that I must be a Russian spy. Soon I should have been denounced as such, only that my letters of recommendation from Angora inspired confidence. Now occurred a fresh piece of bad luck. Just at this moment, when at last our real business was beginning, Beschkov received orders to leave Turkey within three days, as at the beginning of February he would reach the end of the two months allowed to Bulgarians. Letters and despatches to Angora had remained without an answer during this brief period and my efforts in the vilayet proved fruitless, the Vali, entrenched behind the orders of the Government, merely shrugging his shoulders. And so the evening came when Beschkov was to take his enforced departure. We sat in a state of silent depression, our heads bent over the drawing table, busying ourselves over the revised copy of my plan of the town. Suddenly a civic official happening to pass by caught sight of the plan and became so fascinated by it that he asked for a copy of it for the municipality. This gave me my chance. I declared I should be most willing to present my plan to the municipality but that, unfortunately, without Beschkov's help I could not complete it. The official promised immediately to secure a renewal of Beschkov's permit, and on the following morning there came from the

vilayet a document in which a provisional permit was granted pending an answer from Angora. That this would be favourable I knew full well, so at last we were able to give our minds hopefully again to our journey into the country, although until the Angora answer arrived Beschkov would not be free to leave the town.

Fruitless though my efforts had been to win the favour of the Vali, I managed with astonishing ease to get into the confidence of the people of the town. Shortly after my arrival an employé of the hotel, who was suffering from the painful so-called "Egyptian" eye-trouble so prevalent in the East, noticed, while doing my room, the travelling medicine chest which I had with me, and asked me whether I was a doctor and whether I had a cure for his disease. I had been able to ease him a little by a couple of injections and had given no more thought to the matter; the servant, however, in his gratitude to me had gone about singing my praises as "a famous eye doctor." Naturally this commendation did not fail to have results. Every day Turks came to visit me, all confident that I could heal their eye troubles, from the slightest inflammation of an eyelid to serious cases of cataract and glaucoma. While having an instinctive disinclination for the medical practice thus entailed, I soon saw that in many instances I could give real relief, and incidentally I was afforded opportunities for taking anthropological measurements; for, strong as is the Mohammedan's objection to uncovering his head in the presence of unbelievers or to letting them touch him, my patients showed themselves quite amenable, fully satisfied as they were that the necessary number of eye-drops could best be calculated by the measurement of the proportions of their skulls. So I went on with my doctoring, not neglecting to take all possible precautions to avoid the serious danger of infection.

And yet, careful as I was habitually, it so happened that in an unguarded moment I let myself in for an eye affection

which was to trouble me grievously throughout my entire stay in Turkey! I had been treating a man afflicted by trachoma and had succeeded in moderating the very persistent inflammation which accompanied it. So that my patient's sensitive eyes should not be made bad again from the unwonted sight of the snow, I advised him to protect them by wearing a pair of motoring spectacles which it was easy to make for him. Next time he visited me I tried on these spectacles—and thus my misfortune came about. From that time onwards I suffered from an eye complaint which did not leave me for months. I treated it provisionally myself, not allowing it to interfere with my work. I little guessed how soon it was to throw the land of my explorations into complete darkness.

In the meantime the snow was melting beneath the rays of the increasingly hot sun, and I proceeded to turn this improvement in affairs to good account. Any kind of big expedition was out of the question as long as Beschkov had to keep within the confines of the town, but it was practicable for me to make single-day excursions and in the course of them to undertake morphological investigations of the environs. So I got the motor-cycle out of the dark garage and went up the road leading to the Zigana Pass. After a short ascent, however, I had to give it up owing to the dense snow; it was possible to proceed only on foot so I clambered up the steep slopes of the Dermendere. I now began to collect specimens of stones for the purpose of my geological charts. I made my way up to a height of 1400 or 1500 yards in order to study the complicated construction of the terraces, following the water-courses up to their source in the heights along gullies and ravines, and it was late in the evening that with my now heavy knapsack on my back I remounted my machine and rode back to the hotel. I was to find my strength, however, less and less equal every day to the exertions involved in this kind of work. In fact, the

more I sought to pull myself together in order to accomplish my task the more clearly I came to realize that I was not up to them. It was now that for the first time I resolved to give up smoking, and when I had done so I found my explorations much less fatiguing. My eyes alone troubled me and became steadily worse.

At last our bad luck seemed to have left us. Beschkov received the extension of his permit and was now able to take part in the day excursions. We had decided an excursion to Dermendere should be the final one, as I had got to know by now the entire vicinity of Trebizond and it was time to think of our more extensive expeditions. The countryside lay before us glistening in the sun. For the first time we felt we could breathe freely, as it seemed as if we had overcome all obstacles. But on this very same day my eye trouble suddenly reasserted itself. We had made an early start and by midday my eyes were burning; in the afternoon Beschkov remarked jokingly that they looked as red as an albino's; by sunset I could see nothing except a dull gleam behind a misty veil.

I had to pay dearly for that day's journey. For an entire week I lay in a darkened room and cursed the unlucky chance which, through a moment's incautiousness, had made me liable thus to be shut out from light and life. In order to get rid forcibly of painful reflections on all the time I was losing, I concentrated my mind upon my plan of the town. How complicated the construction of the town had seemed to me at first! How senseless and irrational I had thought the intermingling of straight streets and irregular alleys! Analysing the problem now in all its features and seeing them all in the right perspective—the natural peculiarities of the site, the sea, and the terraces, the influences of history, the effects of the unceasing traffic, the characteristics of the ruling races—I seemed to see my way through the darkness and the chaos. I saw how with almost mathematical simplicity

GREEK CEMETERY IN THESSALONIKI

everything had shaped itself—how what looked like the workings of cha e had really been inevitable. And the encircling of the Pontus range, which during my voyage along the coast of the Black Sea also had seemed to me a gigantic plaything of chance, would they not also in the course of a few weeks take on their real aspect as the necessary outcome of mighty laws? For chance is only a necessity the laws of which we do not know. . . . And so I learned gradually to bear with the fatality of my affliction.

When I had recovered from that attack we began to think again of the possibilities of our journey. There was still heavy snow upon the mountains. Draught-animals were beyond my means, so we decided to hire a boat and to cruise eastwards along the coast, making excursions into the interior as we went. Accordingly we began our preparations. As a first important item of our equipment we secured at a low price a tent which had belonged to the luckless Schmude Expedition. Then we went in search of a boat. We had to put on one side our first aspirations to a motor-boat as impracticable, but we soon found a skiff large enough to accommodate two oarsmen in addition to ourselves and such baggage as we might find absolutely essential. And now while suddenly confronted with the nautical problems which had to be solved I found a powerful aid in the head of the Capuchin Mission. This good Father, who saw clearly that in the East only those spiritual missionaries are a success who have a useful part to play in the life of the people, was universally beloved by reason of his wealth of knowledge and his great helpfulness. He took me by surprise by giving me a present out of his treasure-house: a motor. Delighted and filled with eagerness, we installed this invaluable object in the boat, and having rigged her out anew, and painted her a gleaming white, we inscribed in proud large lettering on her sides the name *Kreuzer Leipzig*. Then we hoisted the Leipzig Fair pennant and she was ready to be launched.

With the entire German colony participating in the function—there were just three globe-trotters in Trebizond at the time—and in full view of a crowd of uninvited but curious spectators, our *Kreuzer* floated out into the sea.

But alas ! not far ! For the motor, which had gone excellently during the launch, now refused to propel the boat. The two Turkish oarsmen sniggered as they rowed us back to the land, where the motor was taken out and examined. But not all the advice and all the combined wisdom of the assembled experts could induce the American contrivance to begin working again. And so the *Kreuzer Leipzig*, in spite of all the transformations she had gone through, remained what she had been before her christening: a rowing-boat with a thin square sail on a pine-trunk mast.

On her we now fared in leisurely fashion eastwards. But first, as I felt convinced that a terrace had been submerged in the sea, I endeavoured with the help of my primitive lead-line to note the varying depths of the water near the coast. Our little nutshell of a craft rocked about so violently in the rough waves, however, that more than once I and my line went overboard. On getting on board again, after much exertion, I was greeted by the now pallid Beschkov with the enquiry: " Is it as bad in the water as it is here ? " As I took my place beside him again, feeling, like him, both sea-sick and frozen to the marrow, I felt there was not much to choose.

We often landed in order to make excursions into the interior or along the mountainous coast-line, returning to the boat next day. One morning, when we got back to her, the barometer was particularly low and our oarsmen, sniffing like dogs after game, shook their heads dubiously. We could only hope that in spite of the East we could manage to reach the next convenient landing-place, but we had scarcely made a start when the bellying sail emptied and began to flap about in the contrary wind ; the waves were still flowing

towards the west but now the wind was lashing their crests backwards into froth and foam. " The sea is blossoming ! " said our helmsman in his Turkish style, shaking his head reflectively. Immediately from the west there came squall after squall at ever shorter intervals until our skiff lay almost flat on her side, shipping water unceasingly. Even now when the *Kreuzer Leipzig* was being blown this way and that like a paper boat, our men remained imperturbable. Boldly but carefully, they navigated her until we reached our landing-place. They had already drawn out the soaped landing-planks and had struck sail, when a violent blast sent her ashore stern foremost into the sand and the surge went raging over us all and our baggage. I sprang excitedly into the water, the icy cold of which cut me to the skin and which foamed all round my head, and putting forth all my strength, I shoved and shoved until I got the boat gradually afloat again so that we might bring her up on shore properly in the usual way.

Dripping now and shivering from the cold, I longed to get into fresh clothes and sit down in front of a warm fire, but there were to be new troubles over the setting up of our tent. The wind blew out the canvas so violently that the pegs would not hold. Were it not for the help given by the inhabitants of a village hard by who hurried up we should have had to spend the whole night in the open.

After that, on we sped again eastwards. Our first long stay was at Syrmene. Leaving our two men in the boat, we went up into the mountain and pitched our camp near the house of a Turk with whom we made friends. We made a long and careful study of the nature of the region, which had been split asunder in places by earthquakes. After some days thus spent, we returned to the boat and proceeded to the next valley. Here our seamen stood alongside the tent with a soldier who showed no inclination to leave us. With a friendly grin he assumed the role of expert guide, showing

that we began to have too little time for undisturbed labour. On returning from a day's expedition (undertaken whenever fleeting glimpses of the sun made one practicable), we found our tent filled with the cries and laughter of our visitors. They would come in endless crowds not from the neighbouring villages merely but from the nearest town to gossip with the Europeans and drink coffee and, above all, smoke Samsun tobacco. There was one official who wanted us to get him a German wife ; there was a religious fanatic who sought to win me over to Islam ; there were peasants who hoped I could cure their hens from the most incurable diseases ; there were soldiers who liked to come and talk with our Cerberus ; there were fishermen who discussed the merits of our boat ; finally there was an attractive and courageous Caucasian youth who, undeterred by poverty and privations, wished to make his way to Germany. The narrow dimensions of the tent could scarcely hold our crowds of visitors ; things got serious when March came, and with it the Islamic Ramadan, the month during which the True Believer must not eat or drink, and—worse still—must not smoke between the rising and the setting of the sun. For now a resourceful brain evolved the theory that our tent, over which waved the German flag, constituted an extra-territorial region in which the severe edict of the Prophet could not hold good. And so there came many a visitor just to enjoy a few whiffs from a cigarette !

Thus the days flew past, always changing yet always the same. In the morning sea-sickness owing to the rough waves ; the afternoons spent wandering and exploring in among the snow-covered Pontus mountains ; the evening, with happy visitors chattering on the beach or playing on an old fiddle ; the nights shivering in the tent, still riddled by the winds : so went the weeks their rhythmical, monotonously alternating course. Gradually, however, the over-conscientious zeal of our gendarme became too burdensome for me, so we devised a plan of campaign : while I would pretend that I was going

to remain at home in the tent all day, Beschkov would get up early, equip himself with quite unnecessary but to all seeming important apparatus, and set out on an expedition alone. We knew always that the soldier would then, after an anxious look at me, decide to accompany Beschkov on his formidable-looking mission, while I could proceed undisturbed with my exploration of some neighbouring valley which no other European had ever trod.

Our ruse succeeded. Within half an hour of Beschkov's start westwards followed by his shade, I set forth towards the east. Now, working hard, I experienced the delight, so long denied me, of undisturbed exploration, and when I got to the ridge behind which I could descry the yearned-for valley with its alpine pastures, its wild hazel-bushes and rhododendron thickets, I had an accurate chart of my route, a score of exposed photographic plates, and a knapsack full of stone specimens.

On my way up I met a shepherd who was minding his flock on the mountain side. Noonday solitude brooded all around us; I sat down sociably beside the sun-tanned, muscular youth, who at first remained shy and silent, offered him some chocolate which he first tasted wonderingly, then ate with keen relish, and began talking to him about my wanderings. He then grew confiding and began to talk, showed me the way down to the valley, and waved good-bye to me. He then followed me, laughing, to give me my hat, which I had forgotten on the stone near where he sat. When as I went through the grove I once turned back towards him, I saw come up to him a bearded old man who, pointing several times to me, began to speak to him excitedly. Then the boy came running towards me. In tones half bold, half shy, he asked me to come back as his friend wanted to say something to me. I answered that I had no time and proceeded on my way quickly. The youth ran down after me and I had scarcely reached the narrow path through the

wood at the end of the meadow when he sprang with cat-like agility in front of me to prevent me from going on. With a quiet rebuke, I shoved him on one side. But the darkness of the wood seemed to give him courage and now he insolently demanded rings and money from me. On my making no reply, he drew a dagger and sprang at my throat. I had not reckoned on the possibility of such an encounter, all the other natives having been friendly, and I was therefore unarmed. Feeling the cold steel touch my neck, I summoned forth all my strength, shook the young man off, sent him reeling, half-stunned, with a blow on the head from my heavy camera, and made off. I had only just managed at a turn of the path to jump into a dense hazel-thicket which hid me when I heard the shepherd coming after me again yelling. I now unloosed my hammer—for if I were discovered it would be a fight for life. I ducked down deeper still in the undergrowth, but the shepherd went on wildly into the valley, passing me. I could not venture to return by the pathway, as the older man stood up there on the alert. I saw I must try to make a bit of a circuit, for the shepherd knew that I had to get back into the valley by the shore and I did not want to encounter him down there again at any price. So I scrambled through thorns and thickets right down into the wild growths of the ravine, scratched, slipping and breathless, reached the principal valley and made a run for it to the sea. I realized now what a risk I had run of being killed and I took an oath that I should never go out again without a pistol.

How I rushed along the narrow pathway which runs between the torrent-like stream and the steep rock! Suddenly I found my road barred, for sitting on the pathway were three wood-cutters, bold, truculent-looking fellows, busy tying up logs into rafts and getting them afloat on the water. They scrutinized me with astonishment, nudged each other and whispered, making gestures which did not seem to bode well

TRIPIZOND WOMEN AT A WELL

A PRIMITIVE DWELLING IN THE ISCHOROCH VALLEY

for me. How now was I to get out of this accursed valley? I had on one side of me the precipitous rock, on the other the foaming river, I had my pursuer behind me, and these three dark figures in front. Assuming a confident demeanour, I advanced calmly towards the group, all of whom maintained a puzzled silence, and sat down beside them on the stone as though fatigued after a pleasant walk. A friendly conversation, accompanied perhaps by some little present—that seemed to me the only possible way to prevent another onslaught! But how to begin? An oppressive silence lay upon us and made us all realize the more keenly the unnaturalness of the situation. When at last one of the older men asked who I was and what brought me to this out-of-the-way forest, I answered mechanically that I was a German engineer sent thither to look about for ore. Upon which the younger of the three gave me a sly, friendly glance, and said "Das ist sehr schön!" I jumped up and embraced him, for never in all my life had four short German words made me feel so happy as these. These four words, as it turned out, were the only ones the man knew but they had established a cordial relationship between us. After I had learnt from them how the Turks in the German army had acquired this German tag, I had to tell them of my recent adventure. And the story of this attack upon an ally filled them with such indignation that it was with difficulty I prevented them from going after the shepherd with their axes.

As it was a good way to the bottom of the valley and the wood-cutters declared it was rash to go about in these parts unarmed, I gladly accepted the company of the ex-soldier and parted from him only when I saw Beschkov waiting for me by the shore I promised my new friend an early return, upon which he said smilingly and with a soft drawl: "Das ist sehr schön!" Beschkov was in a state of great anxiety, for it was long past the hour at which we had arranged to meet. Our worthy gendarme, on the other hand, displayed

for the first time a feeling of genuine delight while I was narrating the events of the day—not just out of *Schadenfreude*, for he now had an interesting matter to report. And he duly consigned it to paper that same evening, grunting with satisfaction, while we had to promise him that we should not start on our return journey to Trebizond until the report should have reached his superior officers. We had in the meantime decided to return to the town, for work in common was made impossible by the presence of this soldier, and going about alone, as my experience proved, was too dangerous. We hoped in a personal discussion with the Vali to secure what written requests and explanations had failed to get for us.

It was in the evening that we set eyes again on Trebizond. With its tall terraces of houses from the windows of which long rays of light trembled over the water, the town looked like a Christmas tree with candles burning. In the background we saw the dark outline of Boz Tépé, crowned by its mosque with its one minaret pointing heavenwards like a finger. As we approached the mountains vanished from sight and the lights of the town went out and black night encompassed us. Our boatmen made cautiously for the land; but as our sand-planks had got out of place during the last storm, our keel suddenly touched bottom with a sharp grating sound, and, uncertain how far we were from the shore, we feared that the boat listing over as she was might capsize, especially as the stern was already being swamped with water. Once again I saw there was nothing else for it but for me to jump into the water, which was still terribly cold, and to push and shove until the boat was again afloat.

At Trebizond, on application to the Vilayet, though such things were not easy to manage, I succeeded in getting back my photographic apparatus which I had had to leave behind me when fleeing from my assailant. The plates, indeed, were cracked or broken and two shining metal portions of

the camera had been torn off. The leather case the thief had thrown away as useless.

I was surprised not only by the rapidity with which the investigations were taken in hand and my property restored to me, but also by the evident indignation which was evoked by the attack upon me. Such things as a matter of fact are of rare occurrence in Turkey. But what astonished me most of all was the impartiality of the officials at Trebizond with whom I had hot contests over every minute detail connected with my right to explore. On this occasion they asked me : " Well, but could you not have shot this criminal down ? You would have been well within your rights in so doing." The Afghans take a different view of a similar incident ; but this I was to learn later.

# CHAPTER IV

## IN COLCHIS AND OFF TO BAIBURT

ONCE again we sailed away. Spring had now come and everything was suddenly in bloom. Delicate hues floated above the dark Maquis shrubs; in varieties of colouring from white to blazing red blossomed the tropical fruit-trees; bright yellow and pale purple tulips appeared in the meadows; strangely large violets pressed their way up in the crevices between the stones, and the dense thicket of rhododendrons had now an aspect of indescribable beauty. A riot of colours for the eye, and, almost disquieting in the intensity of its scents, the entire land seemed to want to break into flower.

When for the first time—it was in the neighbourhood of Rize—I made my way up into the mountains through the valleys, I came across an unusually large number of country folk journeying down to the town on foot or with heavily-laden draught-animals. I got talking with a peasant who came up to me in a smiling and unconcerned sort of way, his umbrella hanging from his coat-collar behind him, while his wife followed him slowly, bent and almost hidden beneath a gigantic burden of maize straw. "It is Bazaar-day down on the coast," he explained. "You see, I am taking maize straw to the market." Like many others they had both been trudging along for days together in order to barter away their poor wares, often only two or three pounds of butter, in return for salt or a little sugar, an expensive commodity. Often, also, they would buy at their own risk nails, wire, iron

bars and other such things with a view to selling them again in the Tschoroch Valley, a long way on the other side of the 10,000-feet-high passes, and thereby earn a couple of pfennigs for their pains. And they feel rich in their poor contentment; for they know nothing else.

Now followed a couple of days of strenuous and happy work. And once again the Fates imposed a limitation: while I was taking the temperature of the sea as was my usual custom immediately before starting, my deep sea thermometer was washed away by the current. I rushed after it at once but only succeeded in getting hold of it after much diving and searching because the seething waters kept carrying it further and further out.

The sea was still so cold that even on the sunlit heights at midday and beside our coal fire at night I could not get warm again. And next morning when I woke up my eye was inflamed to a dark red. We packed up at once and sailed, with the wind favouring us, to Rize, where I hoped to get rid of the trouble by the day's rest. When we reached the place, we put up our tent again on the sandy shore for reasons of economy, as our previous encampment had been unproductive from the standpoint of remunerative work, but another storm forced us out of our tent and we had to spend several days in the hotel. In the meantime both my eyes had become so painfully inflamed that I could neither read nor write, and after a week of complete rest in bed they were still no better—the grey veil was still denser and darker all round me. Day and night the spectre of blindness haunted me and I could obtain no relief; my financial resources did not allow of my even getting into Russia to consult some reliable doctor. But I was anxious at least to return to Trebizond, which was a haven of refuge to me throughout my adventures. So we parted company with our boatmen and returned thither by steamer.

Trebizond—so I felt from the warmth in the air—was

indeed, lied to him, as we had explained merely that we wanted to travel to the south, over the Zigana Pass to Baiburt. It was not necessary to add that we proposed afterwards to make our way through the unknown Tschoroch Valley, over the mountain ridges and so back along the coast. If we might not go to the east, at least we should come back from the east. What was essential for our purpose was the exploring of that eastern section. How we got thither did not matter.

On the evening before our start, I sat in the hotel garage chatting with the chauffeurs and revealed to them our intentions about the journey over the Zigana Pass. There were exclamations at once of astonishment. "What, with your motor-cycle?" they asked incredulously. "You are going to try and get up over the two high passes to Baiburt with your little 4½-horse-power machine! Why, we feel pleased when we manage it on a 50 horse-power!" How often had they not told me about the cracks in the mountains and the steep serpentine roads, and the yawning abysses in which the best drivers had lost their lives? They begged and implored of me not to attempt it, and when they saw I was resolved they shrugged their shoulders. Only Mehmed, a special friend and well-wisher of ours, was encouraging. "To-morrow evening," he said, "I must get on to Erzeroum with the Berliet, so I shall catch you up. You can rely upon that."

We began our ascent in cheerful mood on the smartened-up and well-oiled motor-cycle, Beschkov sitting enthroned on our baggage like a Pasha. We were forced to leave the side-car at Trebizond, to spare the machine. Behind the promontory of Boz Tépé the Pontus range rose up like a gigantic wall. Soon the Dermenderesu river, the course of which we had been following, was lost in the depths of the valleys, while we zigzagged our course along the terrace up to the heights. Then our surroundings took on an aspect quite

A TURKISH WOMAN AND HER HOME

A VIEW ON THE TSCHOROCH

strange to us, and the inhabitants no longer greeted us as old acquaintances. The views became ever more free and wide. Snow-capped ridges rose heavenwards all around us. Deep down, we could see the stream rushing along at the bottom of an immense ravine. In the remote distance, beyond endless forests, gleamed the dark blue of the sea.

Leaving the motor-cycle in the shade of a rock crevice to cool, we did some surveying. There streamed past us once again the immemorial procession of Orientals along the great trade route and Turks and Kurds and Persians stared in wonder at our machine, the like of which they had never before witnessed. A Turkish Captain, mounted on a big horse, who was going our way, pulled up to talk with us. " Where are you bound for ? " he asked. " For the Zigana Pass, like yourself," I answered. " You will soon have to turn back," he rejoined. " We shall see, anyway, who gets there first ! " " Good," I exclaimed, " we'll make it a bet ! " Laughing, he sped on.

And now we were, in fact, confronted by such a bad stretch of road that we really began to doubt whether we should ever see our rider again, for the snowdrifts had been melting into rivulets which ran across it and had turned it into a morass. Where the burning sun had already dried it up, it looked as though waves had been suddenly transformed into rocks. We had to pick our steps while we guided our machine this way and that over the uneven ground between the baked protuberances and the muddy furrows, precipitous rocks on one side of the road and a ravine on the other. When we got to the top of the next hill, however, we had a joyful surprise : a troop of stone-breaking workmen were engaged here on the mending of the road—a thankless task in this wild Pontus region in which violent storms will destroy to-morrow the creations of to-day, and with the primitive tools wherewith the workers were equipped. In the depths of the ravine below the rapids of the Dermenderesu went tumbling over

the countless Russian machines for stone-breaking and road-mending: they had all been thrown into the river.

Along the good stretch of road already mended the machine now went merrily. "Here we are, Captain!" I exclaimed as we flew past our competitor. But our pride was to be of short duration. At the next bend of the road we were met by a herd of draught-horses, the first of which shied at us, turning in his fright and setting up a panic among all the rest. "*Scheîtan araba*!"—"Satan's coach!" exclaimed the man in charge of the animals, covering his face to protect himself from our machine. And while we busied ourselves helping to get back the horses, the Turkish Captain rode past triumphantly, bidding us good-bye with a smile.

Caravans of camels, bullock-waggons, horses, mules and donkeys, kept passing us to an accompaniment of shouts and yells from their drivers. Presently we again came to a free stretch of good road and were able once more to catch up and pass our horseman. Then another impediment presented itself in the shape of a flock of sheep being driven down to the grazing valleys by a shepherd who carried a rug and a number of cooking utensils on his back. It was out of the question for us to ride on; we had to wait on one side while the Captain guided his steed through the living and moving maze. Beschkov ran after him, trying by blows here and shoves there to keep the path clear for me.

The countryside was becoming barer and barer, while our road rose steadily and uninterruptedly. Now we noted a resting-place for camels; now a rude dwelling-place made of wood with tiny windows—little more than holes, lest the icy blasts from the north-west should penetrate; now, more and more rarely a cluster of tattered-looking pines. At last we reached the region where there were no more trees. And now we were rejoicing at the thought that we had got over the worst part of our journey when suddenly we heard the fellies of one wheel striking hard and joltingly upon the

stones. A puncture! With groans and curses we tore off the outer tyre and busied ourselves, with bleeding fingers, remedying the damage. Whilst so occupied, the Turkish Captain came along and gazed compassionately upon us. He handed us his flask and bade us drown our wrath. "But you have lost the race," he said.

We also felt that we had done so, as apathetically we watched him riding off, and as we made ready to follow, tired and downhearted. It was a fearful grind getting up that steep ascent, made almost impossible by ever deeper and denser streams from the melting snow. Very cautiously we went over a high bridge of stone from which we had a very cheering sight. Below, in front of us, stretched like a shining white ribbon a road of a quality to challenge comparison with our best roads over the Dolomites.

Now we were no longer being jolted over ground riddled with holes and had no longer to guard against side-slips into an abyss, while the freshness of the air cooled our heated faces. At last we were able to do as we liked. Now the machine romped along jubilantly, taking the upward curves perfectly, and we shot past the Captain again. Secure of victory he was indulging in a snack by the way. As we passed him with a greeting, he put a last bit of bread into his mouth and remounted hurriedly to follow us. And now we could descry a small house ahead of us on the hill-top: we were approaching the Zigana Pass.

"Put on speed! Put on speed! He is catching us up!" cried my comrade. We went humming up the hill, which became steeper and steeper, our ascent undisturbed now by anything more troublesome than a donkey—a member of that admirable and unique species whose composure is not to be upset even by a motor-cycle. On and on we went, Beschkov calling out: "Quick, quick, he is catching us up!" I did not dare to take my eyes off our road and my handle-bars. "Where is he now?" I called at last, and while Beschkov,

more and more excited, shouted his reply, we were startled by cries from on ahead. The men on duty in the Pass-house had become aware of the strange race and were waving to us. Now Beschkov was beside himself. The Captain had left the winding road and was making a short cut by a footpath ! He would be in front of us in a minute ! But we had reached the level now. I turned on the third speed and we shot ahead, passing him just where the footpath joined the road. We had won !

As we proceeded to celebrate our victory with a banquet of eggs and tea and then to make our necessary surveying observations of the Zigana region, it seemed as though we had dropped into a new world. The look of the Karaschut Valley, down into which the road continued in a steep descent of a thousand yards or so, reminded us of the central regions of Anatolia. Instead of the rich woods on the northern slopes here we saw only isolated trees, standing at regular intervals wide apart as though planted by hand, while in place of the dark eruptive stone to which our eyes had become accustomed we were surrounded by conglomerate masses coloured a fiery red by the sun. Using the lowest gear and applying the brake strenuously we glided down close by the projecting rocks, dangerously nearing the ravine on the side at the curves. Every now and again we had to stop in order to lift the machine over the streams and pools which had formed along the road since the snow had begun to melt. But the machine stood all this excellently, and without accident we reached the valley. Now we had a smooth and easy ride to Baiburt, which we knew was not far distant. But just at this point we were to meet with a new disaster. The grating noise of wooden wheels on unoiled axles warned us that an ox-waggon was approaching ; as it came jolting along round a bend in the road, driven by a little man sitting on the shaft, I moved the machine—as always at such moments—to the ravine side of the road and shut off the motor so that the

animal should not be frightened by its clatter. The driver had all but got past safely close up to the other side when his ox, shying suddenly, whirled the cart right round so violently that it smashed up against us. To keep our balance was impossible—the only thing to do was to manage a not too damaging fall. Drawing up my legs, I threw myself instinctively in the direction away from the ravine, then felt another heavy blow, followed by a lasting pain which went all over my body. When I lifted myself up groaning, Beschkov's head, all bruised, popped up before my eyes. The machine, however, had gone down into the gully. Now the poor driver, shaken with fright, began to stammer out excuses in a stream of almost unintelligible words and, smiling in spite of my pain, I told him not to worry—it wasn't his fault. This unlooked-for attitude of justice left him gaping with wonder, but fearing apparently that I should even yet want to wreak vengeance on him for what I had suffered, he drove off as quick as he could, urging on his beast with excited shouts. Meanwhile we had begun to rub our injured limbs. I did not dare at first to look down after the machine. "How deep is it?" I asked Beschkov anxiously. Beschkov looked. "Nearly forty feet," he replied. "Well," I said, "that is the worst thing yet. We shall have to leave it there. No good trying to get it up." It had now begun to rain slightly, so I pulled myself together. I felt that if we did not act decisively and effectively now at once we should have to spend the night out in the open.

It took us an hour's energetic work to get the machine up on the road again. It was out of the question to ride any further on it with its bent front fork, but apart from this our good old "Wanderer" was not seriously damaged. Our progress was depressing now, as we two disabled specimens, feeling thoroughly shattered and aching all over, trudged along with this third disabled specimen between us in the rain, which increased steadily, to the next village. We arrived there late

at night and sitting in front of a charcoal fire in the little mud hut in which we were welcomed by a sympathetic peasant family, I set myself to the task of straightening out the front fork of my machine. But in vain. About midnight, just as I had given it up as a bad job, Beschkov, who had been out, reappeared at the door, all smiles. "Mehmed is here!" he exclaimed. Bravo, Mehmed! He would be a great help to us. In my preoccupation with our accident I had quite forgotten that he would be catching us up that evening. There he was, sure enough, as nonchalant as ever. He looked at the bent fork. "Ah, what did I tell you?" he said. "Well, now you must get everything together. I shall drive you along to Baiburt."

In a moment we were all ready. Seated in our good Mehmed's conveyance we drove along through the Anatolian night, the brilliant side-lamps designing weird ghost-shapes in front of us as we went. A hare, caught in a luminous ray, went springing in great bounds over the stones and puddles in front of us. To our right the darkness was absolute; on that side was the endless gully beside whose course the serpentine roadway had taken us all day. To our left the side-lamps lit up the rocky walls fantastically. We passed a mud hut wrapped in sleep, next a small stone bridge. Mehmed pointed downwards as we crossed it. "There lies one more of us. Sad about poor Ali. He was a good fellow but a wild driver."

At the Baiburt Hotel I crept into my *Wanzenpanzer*, the gauze sack which is pulled over a photo apparatus and which can be tied quite close; in spite of the swarm of bugs I had a refreshing sleep under this makeshift veil. Mehmed had got up early and contrived to mend my front fork, so that I was able to make my first ride on the machine through the town. I found the whole place in a state of great excitement, as several Pashas were expected. Now the rain began to come down again in torrents and some of the inhabitants

went up on the flat roofs of their houses to stamp down the little mounds of clay which had been raised by the beams of the hot sun. My motor-cycle caused quite a sensation. "Mashallah! What a wonderful thing!" A couple of local societies with green and red flags received the Pashas, but the "*Sheïtan araba*"—strange how quickly this name caught on!—was run after by the whole town. And when I allowed a native to sit behind me and thus ride up and down two streets, he attracted more attention than the Pashas.

One ought to see Baiburt from the top of the ruined castle. The rows of houses stretch out horseshoe fashion round the Tschoroch terrace, seeming as it were to crowd out the yellow river. Between them hums the busy life of the commercial town, through which passes all the trade of the Tabriz-Trebizond caravan route, of the agricultural town which collects together the products of the neighbouring Ovas, the fertile centre, and of the modern Turkish town which is embodying the National Will to Achieve by erecting houses of a new and better type and broader streets. The planning of the town was designed in strict accordance with the natural lie of the land; the main street with the bazaar and the new buildings goes along by the Tschoroch, in a horizontal line like the other wide streets which run up to the terrace, while the less wide streets and the quite narrow streets on the slopes knit the parallel lines together. Behind the crowded mass of houses stands another cemetery with dilapidated tombstones. Here suddenly the town ends, without any gradual transition into suburbs or gardens. Treeless slopes extend nakedly, seamed by the dirty white lines of the calcareous strata extending towards the north.

We now began our excursions, going one way and returning another, between Trebizond and Baiburt. Leaving the motor-cycle in the care of friends until we came back, we only hired a pack-horse to carry our baggage so that we might be able to move about freely in these entirely unknown

regions, exploring thoroughly. Mustapha, our brightly-clad, unemotional guide who came with us to look after the horse, was three hours late, but he made up for this by bringing along an impressive caravan of friends who, like ourselves, were bound for Ispir, on the Tschoroch. Our progress on foot, a slow business at best, was delayed greatly by my many investigations and surveying operations. During our halt, however, our companions squatted good-humouredly, watching my actions with much interest but quite unintelligently. At last I became conscience-stricken over these long interruptions of the march. "You should go on ahead quietly," I said to them. "You will get to Ispir two days earlier." They merely smiled. "What should we do there?" they asked. "But you wanted to get to Ispir." They smiled again. "Oh, yes, we want to get there, but we particularly want to go with you." "Have you so much time?" Upon this a handsome, phlegmatic young fellow, removing his umbrella from the collar of his coat, from which it had been hanging, lifted it thoughtfully to protect himself from the sun. "Ah, time, Effendi!" he replied. "Look, there is a magpie, and there another! I shall see more magpies tomorrow. I have been seeing magpies all my life. So it is also with time." Thus did they ease my conscience, and I made a fresh halt in order to enjoy the beautiful view of the Of Dagh at the bend of the Tschoroch to the east over the Ovas.

As the river descends, the countryside grows daily more animated. Soon we espied vineyards, then maize and the mulberry trees and finally the myrtles of Ispir. Frequently the river whirled and eddied its way through blocks of Dioritic granite or rushed through dark ravines of basalt along which no road could follow. Then we would ascend the steep high lands of the region lying between the Pontus wall-like range to the north and the Ak Dagh to the south. High above the roofs of God-forsaken villages which we

MOTORING THROUGH A MOUNTAIN PASS IN EASTERN TUS

scarcely noticed as we passed we came on the fourth day to the luckless village of Kilens, which has hidden itself in a low-lying side valley where the overflowing waters of the Tschoroch find an outlet.

Standing up among all the men of his region, the head-man bade us a warm welcome and asked to be allowed to have us as his guests. Even the oldest inhabitant of the village could not remember ever having seen a European there before —which showed that Russians were not counted as Europeans. With moving kindness the entire village treated this German fellow-man and his companion as a guest and attended to their wants. We were made to hold forth on Constantinople and Angora and Germany and the whole world. "How many inhabitants has Turkey?" one old man enquired. "Thirteen millions," we told him. "And Germany?" "More than sixty-two millions." He jumped to his feet, incredulous. I sought to convince him. "Why, the English King rules over 500 millions," I declared. This was too much for him altogether and he left. Soon a young boy came and whispered to me: "The Muchtar is standing out there and crying." I went outside and put my hand on his shoulder. "My poor Anatolia!" he sobbed. The next morning he went with us part of the way. "If you can't remain, you must come back, and if you can't come back either, you must greet all Germany from me!"

In the evening after we had with due caution got across a dangerous bridge over the Tschoroch, we had an uninterrupted view of Ispir. Upon a rocky eminence standing up in the midst of the whirling rapids could be seen the beautiful ruins of a basilica close to a badly built mosque; below them the usual dense cluster of huts of stone and clay. "Alman! Alman!" a growing chorus of voices kept calling out to us as we walked through the streets. In this place also no German had ever been seen before, and therefore our Baiburt friends had to give way to a swelling tide of inquisitive people

when we reached the " hotel " of Ispir. Cold and tired we had still to answer a thousand foolish questions. What disquieted the people most was that we intended to travel along the road to the coast over the Verschambek. They declared it was made impassable by the snow. The mountain, they asserted, was more sharp-pointed than a minaret. Only once had anyone managed to reach its summit. And then he could not get down. He shot off his gun but nobody could hear it. And there were fleas up there so big that one could shoot them ! . . . And so they kept on. " Do not believe this nonsense," said a sinewy fellow to us in Russian. " I know this part quite well and for ten Turkish pounds I shall be glad to take you there ! " And we settled with him there and then.

The road to Chalanos, the point at which we wanted to begin the ascent, led over the boulders of the former bed of the Tschoroch and then 600 or 700 yards down a steep ravine. Screened almost entirely from view by great clusters of mulberry trees lay small isolated villages at the bottom of the valleys, villages formed of wooden houses inhabited by people of foreign races and habits, who live continually on the verge of starvation and for whom escape from their surroundings is impossible. " What kind of crops have you here ? " we asked. " None," was the answer. " Well, but what grows on your fields ? " " We have none. The hill-sides are too steep." " What then do you live on ? " " The milk of our sheep." " But your other needs, how do you provide for them ? How do you pay for your bread ? " " By disposing of our mulberries, which we take on our backs to Ispir." Poor souls ! And the further we got up the mountain the worse off they seemed. Chalanos is so poverty-stricken that the men of the place have to go to the Black Sea towns in the winter to get work, while their women and children remain at home with the sheep, half-starved and frozen. And yet this Chalanos boasts a Hafiz who makes it

famous. He is no ordinary Hafiz, no mere master of the arts of reading and writing and expounder of the Koran. The Hafiz of Chalanos is a veritable seer.

Sitting with him in the open air on the verandah, which commands an uninterrupted view of the snow-clad mountains, we began to discuss religious questions—an unusual theme in Turkey, for the free-thinker will not discuss religion seriously and the Believer conceals two things from the stranger even when the stranger has become a friend: his wife and his attitude to God. The reason, perhaps, is not to be found in mere sensitiveness on these subjects but rather in jealousy and fanaticism. Our Hafiz, on the contrary, was wise enough to experience deep feelings in regard to religion and sure enough of his beliefs to be able to talk openly about them. "You know the Koran," he said to me. "Does it not show that Mohammed perfected the earlier precepts?" "Forgive me, my friend," I answered, "not perfected, but brought them home to the masses. His religion is without a parallel as a system for regulating our lives, but in inherent virtues it is perhaps excelled by others." "You mean Christianity and Buddhism?" he rejoined. "I know little about them." And I was constrained to tell much about both. "But who can obey all these commandments?" he asked with vehemence. "No one could obey all the Christian commandments and the Buddhist never could be obeyed, or only by a monk or two living in the wilds of central Asia. Whereas with us there are many who observe all the commandments of the Prophet. Is it not much better to have a religion whose laws may be honourably kept than one whose commands so far transcend the natures of the masses of mankind that they lead even the most pious into hypocrisy?"

I pointed to the snow-covered mountains and to the deep valley in the shade. "Could you imagine this region more beautiful?" I asked.

The Hafiz shook his head thoughtfully: "Its beauty is

perfect indeed," he answered; "and yet no, the mountain-sides might be clad with forests as on the other side of the range, and the valleys might be sunnier and might have more fields to show, and might be brightened with green meadows like those in the moister region of Lasistan. And I know now what your question means: whatever heights may be reached by the beauty of a beautiful idea, one should not be satisfied with a goal already reached—for there are still better things to strive for. But believe me: just as the sun rises above all the mountains, the large and the small, so Allah bestows the Truth, the veritable Good, lying perfected in his hands alone, upon every believer in every religion."

There was as yet no sign of dawn when our guide woke us. The Hafiz accompanied us for some distance. When I exhorted him to return he pointed silently to the snowy peaks above us which the rising sun had begun to illumine. It was a grief to me to part from him. He went back silently to his poor village while we began the ascent to the pass between Verschambek and Tatos—the path leading into dark Lasistan. The ever thinning atmosphere and the deep snow hindered our advance—we had to struggle for every foothold; but while Beschkov and I staggered along groaning under our burden, our guide went on gaily regardless of his still heavier knapsack and of the added weight of the stone specimens which he was carrying. The country had begun to display Alpine characteristics more and more, with U-shaped valleys and all the formations resulting from glaciers going back to the ice-period. The smaller range of mountains behind us looked now all of about the same height, their snow-capped summits spreading out like a wall, bounded, on the other side of the Tschoroch by the chain of the Armenian highlands. As the north wind had put great snow-drifts in our way the last stage of the ascent was a difficult piece of work. At the height of 2950 metres we reached the pass and took a rest in the warm sunshine, but with a fierce wind

blowing. While I was busying myself with my notes, my eyes were being fascinated by the Tatos Peak to the left, while the Verschambek, like a steep pyramid, arrested my attention on the other side. Despite our guide's warnings and our very defective equipment for climbing, our anxiety to complete our cartographical observations from the Tatos Peak 300 metres higher tempted us to try and make the ascent. But the frozen surface of the mountain sides prevented us from being able to get a grip with our hands and the slippery rocks refused any kind of foothold, so we had to give it up.

Northwards in front of us stretched out the valley to which we were to come, the descent to which consisted of a series of terraces, growing less steep and less uneven gradually. The first and steepest section we now covered merrily and quickly enough over the crisp snow; then we had a more difficult bit to cope with over a moraine region which told of earlier ice-formations. Not until we had descended to a height of 2400 metres, where the last moraine lay, did the ground take on a restful aspect, rounded granite knobs becoming the chief features of the landscape. Down and down we went into the valley. On we sped over the boulder-strewn, strongly-flowing mountain streams, through meadows with the first huts of herdsmen, the "Jailas," from whose cattle sheds the dung was led down by drains direct upon the fields so as to enable the thin barley to ripen in the four short months of their crop-season, and through the cool woodlands which would now keep us company all the way down to the sea, until we reached Kala, where we were to spend the night. We were now in the heart of Lasistan, in the land of immense ravines and Alpine peaks, in the land of impenetrable forests and heavy mists which only the cool fresh winds coming down from the mountains heights are able to drive seawards during the nights. "We see less of the sun than of the moon," a peasant said to me. We were in the land of the Lases, the

blue-eyed Indo-Germanic type of the Caucasian family of nations who with their valley princedoms have stood up against the Sublime Porte from earliest times, the defiant mountaineer and efficient seaman, who by their doughty deeds have given the lie to the Turkish proverb that the Lase is the lowest of human types as the goose is the lowest of animal types. And, as we were soon to realize that first evening in Kala, we were in the land of that maize bread which is so hard that you can almost hear the bits of it rattle down your belly!

As the Hodsha in whose house we spent the night discovered any number of dangerous maladies of which the Europeans might free him, we did not get much sleep, but the romantic beauty unfolded before our eyes next morning made us forget our fatigue. A river, swollen by the melting snow-drifts, came thundering down into a dark gully. A narrow footpath led through the pine woods hard by. Avalanches, which had crashed down into the valley with such force that they had been thrown high up on the opposite side, had made great breaches through the forest. Fair-haired shepherds led their sheep and goats up to the mountain pastures accompanied by fierce dogs and snub-nosed women who (unluckily!) went unveiled.

Presently we found ourselves in the verdant twilight of the primeval forest, where myrtles and beeches interlaced their branches in exquisite festoons above the pathway, where the tendrils of the liana were interlaced with the hazel-bushes and the limes, where the trunks of single gigantic trees became lost to sight in the green roof. Bees were humming in the dense undergrowth and the pale blossoms of the rhododendrons glistened, while plants of every description grew in such profusion and density that all divergence from the one narrow pathway was made impossible. We were in the famous never-explored land of Colchis, that fragrant and intoxicating wonderland which wraps itself up in its thick

mantle of green and in its veil of clouds. Now and again we came upon a glade which was altogether cleared of its grass by grazing cattle. Sometimes we saw tremendous rocky precipices many hundreds of feet in height, down which the water tumbled in cataracts.

After walking for hours along this path amidst all this marvellous display of woodland beauty we left the lower valley and made for another to which there was a steep ascent. Now we reached a high point whence we had an uninterrupted view of the surrounding region; to the east there curved a long range of mountains, lessening gradually in size as they approached the sea: the mountains of East Pontus with their serrated line, glittering in the snow, a succession of dissimilar shapes, now tower-like, now shaped like heads or like hands, as in the case of "Altiparmak," the Six Finger Mountain; without any transition a broken highland stretched out at their feet, connected by a stretch of ridges all of about equal height. Dense woods, with undergrowth of rhododendron thickets, encircled the lower slopes, allowing scarcely room enough for the scattered houses, while the meadows and pasture lands were dotted with shepherds' huts. To the west rose precipitously the ridges of a new chain, the loftiest peak of which (3400 metres) is Demir Dagh, sinking like an amphitheatre down towards the sea; while towards the north, flanked by terraces, opened out a series of transverse valleys, one after another. Eager investigation enabled us to learn something of the laws which governed the creation of these rich formations, and we could deduce from them the aspect which the neighbouring valley would present to us when we should get down to the banks of the Atina river. Not until we reached the level of the coast, where variations of the sea had obliterated the natural form of the mountain region, had we to find new standards for the new forms.

We waited three days at the further end of the valley for

the motor-boat which was advertised. As we had begun to lose all patience and as the vermin which infested our abode had become too bloodthirsty, we hired a rowing boat in which two youths rowed us to Rize. Here we found the Vali busy at work. Unlike his colleague of Trebizond he was friendly in his manner. He was teaching two apprentices the art of preparing lime, bustling about neatly and efficiently among stones and vats and buckets and lime bags. He seemed the right man in the right place, this Vali of Rize, a good specimen of the modern Turk. Of his own initiative and with only a little assistance from Angora, he had quite transformed his city. Using prisoners as labourers, he had laid down new streets and built new houses, the solid and at the same time airy style of which unites all the characteristics of Greek, Turkish and modern Russian architecture; this happy blending of the three architectural forms was his own achievement. He welcomed us with the easy cordiality of a man of the world. While we were walking together to his house, he said with a smile: "I have gone in a little for geographical work also; perhaps you would like to see something of it"; and he showed me a globe which he had himself constructed, a very fine affair, but marked by a certain individual bias in respect to the proportionate amount of space allotted to the various countries. Whereas England was represented as an island of about the size of Rügen, Germany covered the greater part of Europe, while Africa and North and South America were very small indeed, and Australia did not appear at all. Asia was spread over an extraordinary number of lines of longitude and latitude. To be precise, it was not specifically Asia but rather a dismal-looking continent with a tremendous peninsula to the west of it, the coast of which was adorned with a red circle and the inscription: RIZE.

Those were great days we now proceeded to spend in Trebizond! We returned to the town in high spirits over the success of our secret expedition to the east and we

BAIBURT FROM THE CASTLE

were joyfully greeted by our friends, but the Vali still growled.

Meanwhile we developed our photographic plates, sorted our samples of stones, sadly missing a great consignment from Ispir, and completed the drawing up of our maps. Then it became necessary for us to make a fresh start. Owing to the long winter and my eye-trouble and the set-backs, I had taken too much time over this part of my journey and I was running short of money. I could not write any more articles from these regions for the trade papers. I could not make any more excuses to the Wanderer Company for delaying my departure. Above all I dared not go offering my samples again to the Trebizond importers. I must absolutely get away; and I could console myself only with the hope of completing next year the studies which I had begun.

Our heavy baggage had already been packed in a lorry and a fresh horse had been hired for the journey on foot to Baiburt when a last misadventure occurred. The Commander of Police who had given us the visa and who had still one or two insidious questions to ask us was ill. Making too deep a bow to a French General who had passed through the town, he had tumbled from a ship's gangway into the sea and the frigid waters had given him and his eagerness a thorough damping.

This time we made our way up the high stretch eastwards of the caravan route towards the chief ridge of the Pontus range. Day after day we trudged along over the sultry land —we were now in June—over which a damp north-west wind rolled along increasingly dense clouds of mist. Our route lay through meadows and pasturages, in and out among grazing cattle and their pensive herds, whose blanket-like mantles with wide-stretching shoulders and stiff borders at the bottom gave them a half-priestly air of severity. At moments when the mists were dispelled we caught glimpses of green valleys, one deeper-lying and more hidden than the

others. Here and there upon some rocky mound an eagle might be seen. I shot at one with my pistol and winged it and in reward was given by a shepherd a great drink of milk in accordance with a precept of the Koran: "Almost every day," the shepherd said, "he robbed me of a lamb or a kid, this devil whom you have conquered, Effendi!"

As the mist dispersed, we stood on the heights. Almost as on the edge of a knife did two different worlds meet here, without any connecting links, as only the Orient can mix plain and rock, town and steppe, hut and palace, ruins and new buildings, prince and beggar, daylight and darkness. I now said farewell to the deep, fertile valleys with their primeval woodlands and their rhododendron thickets, and moved on to the regions where a tree is an empty conception because of its rarity. From the full verdure of the pastures and the valleys, I made for the grey-green steppes. I left the mists, the heavy, damp air of Pontus, in order to ascend to the land of endless views where the eyes can drink in their fill of light; behind me lay the pointed gables of the wooden houses and in front of me the flat-roofed mud-huts, behind me the maize fields of the Lase and in front of me the barley fields of Anatolia. The coast behind me was like a narrow, beautiful garden. Now I moved into the wilds of the steppes —into the real Asia.

Descending through the Ovas, fertile islands in a sea of desert land, then ascending again through a grey chalk-stone region, we made for Baiburt. The mountains lay around us, but when I next turned my head as we proceeded northwards, East Pontus had already sunk out of sight behind them.

# CHAPTER V

## A PLEASANT JOURNEY THROUGH ARMENIA

BEFORE me lay a greenish-grey valley of meadowland traversed by a river glistening in the sun. To either side the land rose abruptly in the form of chalk hills percolated by streamlets like sand-heaps after a shower of rain. On the southern slope a snake-like road, clearly outlined and here and there broadening into quite wide terraces, wound its way up to the Pass, which is at an elevation of 2700 metres. This was the same Kop-Dagh road which had taken me into the valley from Baiburt. The valley lay stretched out, lush and peaceful; hawks sunned themselves on the pebbly banks, cows were ambling down to the riverside to drink. The river was the sacred Euphrates, which rises some hundreds of miles further up in the Armenian highlands. I was to follow its course now to Erzeroum, where the plains on the other side of a watershed nourish another river, a sister river, also consecrated in song and story, the Araxes.

Travellers and poets talk of heroic landscapes. Are there tragic landscapes too?—landscapes which by their very nature are fated to be the theatre of devilish deeds?—landscapes wedded to a destiny all darkness? The landscape of Armenia, through which the Euphrates and the Araxes go romping in their childhood over white pebbles, belongs to this order of tragedy.

As though forced together in the grasp of a giant's mighty fingers, the mountains of Asia Minor and Iran are all huddled

together here. Whereas both to the east and to the west, encircling wide expanses of country, they ensure protection and freedom to the peoples living therein, here a country is cabined and confined by them. And this poor land of Armenia is not even compact—it is a thing of shreds and patches. For more recent earthquakes have broken up afresh the mountains which had lain mummified in volcanic lava, turning them into smaller formations, excrescences, craters and depressions; and even in those places upon the fertile table-lands where the hardened lava might have produced a wide open stretch, huge volcanoes, now extinct, sprang up. Thus came into being a relatviely narrow stretch of depressions and hollows, of strips of level ground and ravines with no natural centre which could dominate and give unity to the whole. Moreover, owing to the mountainous nature of the country, only a handful of the soil can be cultivated. Armenia is like a net, the strings whereof represent the narrow strips of cultivation, while the meshes represent the wide steppes and wastes. A scanty and scattered homestead —such is Armenia.

Armenia, then, is placed in the middle of four great natural divisions of country: to the east, Iran, which on the side of Turania becomes connected with the populous regions of Central Asia; to the west, Asia Minor, with its causeways into Europe; to the south, Mesopotamia; and to the north, the Caucasus. By reason of its situation, it should have been Armenia's rôle to become a great central Power, but through its lack of a territory large enough and coherent enough, it could not play this rôle. Closely shut in and with no power to shut out, this Empire of the Centre—as it should have been—became a mere centre of empires whose frontiers were the outcome of incessant collisions.

As long as she attached herself to Rome or Byzantium, Armenia could set up to be the boundary between East and West; but when the sluices were opened to the Mongolian

floods, these floods went sweeping irresistibly over the land, where all the natural thoroughfares were for ever shut in like a funnel. The invading horsemen could not get away either to the north or to the south, for, like gigantic dykes, the Pontus and Taurus ranges held them captives in their course. And when the Mongolian floods had broken at last upon the distant coasts of Asia Minor, they raged back again over Armenia, as no other way could take them back to the round tents of their homeland. Once again did pyramids of skulls rise before the gates of devastated cities and before palaces razed to the ground, once again did the little horses of the Mongols stamp their way through the Armenians' barley-fields. Cut off, and at the same time protected, by hills and ravines, about a dozen Meliks formed their crow's nest strongholds into kingdoms, instead of uniting to win for themselves a free Armenia, and, having no natural centre, despatched embassies to the Pope and to the German Emperor. And scarcely had their wounds healed, when Fate sent them a new disaster. The Kurds, wandering in their nomadic fashion from mountain to mountain, came down upon the Armenian fields and took there the bread they needed to eat with the milk from their sheep.

Above all, since they were officially provided with arms, as a frontier-guard against the growth of Russia, did they more and more wish for land. Stubbornly, energetically, the Armenians, their intellects becoming ever sharper, resisted their hard destinies, producing, beneath their torrid sun, only crops enough to keep themselves alive through the Siberia-like winters and thus to achieve the luxury of being Christians in the East. Then came the last catastrophe. Armenia, once more a zone between North and South, became during the world-war the scene of the wildest massacres, so that nothing remained of it but its name—its population had disappeared. Those who survived formed themselves, with the Soviet's sanction, into a minute Republic which lies

in the eastern region of the country like a penny upon a plate.

* * *

I am in Armenia. When exactly did I enter the country and when shall I leave it? I do not know, for the conception of Armenia has no longer any definite boundary. This narrow region no longer is even a transition ground—it is dispersed, unarmed and defenceless, in the fight for power between East and West.

We foreigners from afar are unable to realize the appalling miseries of this people—we have no means of gauging them. "Think of it!" an Armenian said to me. "An entire race wiped out—a million and a half of people massacred!" "It is so terrible," I replied, "that I cannot realize it. When we are told that it takes seven years for the light from a star to reach the earth, we may believe but we cannot understand The annihilation of your race is like an astronomical conception to us."

And the traveller talks of "a pleasant journey through Armenia"—it is the last touch of tragedy!

* * *

My dear old motor-cycle! One could scarcely recognize it after all the repairs and titivations it had undergone! The Palandöken mountain and the good Father from Trebizond were responsible: the former because it was too steep and the other because he wanted to get up too high on it. When, in order to look at a panoramic view, you force your motor-cycle up to a height of 3,700 metres; when the motor threatens to stop in the middle of a mountain which slopes at an angle of 40 degrees; when you then load yourself with specimens of every kind of stone met with on the mountain-side; and when, finally, tearing down again to the valley, you are taken by the astonished passers-by for an incarnate Satan and you

proceed to demonstrate that this same Satan with his infernal machine has a preference for somersaults as a method of locomotion—why, if you have to pay for the pleasure of your record-breaking ascent with a broken rim to your back wheel, the price is not exorbitant!

Moreover, a good makeshift rim was contrived out of a cunningly-cut piece of oak which kept in position all the way to Persia—there to be regarded as a quite tantalizing object, for in Erzeroum there is a scarcity of wood and the children run after the ox-carts with baskets and fight for what falls—not from the carts—but from the oxen! The nearest wood is more than 150 miles away, so that the inhabitants would have no fuel were it not for the precious cow-dung which is left out to dry in plate-sized discs upon clay walls all through the summer. The smoke that comes from it in the winter is a cordial to the heart! And the brown coal pits in the neighbourhood? But surely no one would be so foolish as to try to keep up a fire with stones! Such new-fangled absurdities were left to the military and the railways!

Not, indeed, that the railway can be fairly accused of being painfully up-to-date! There is an Oriental atmosphere about it; its only achievements as regards speed are when going downhill. It is really the queen of branch railway lines, this narrow gauge line of Erzeroum! Apart from its precipitate descents and its toilsome ascents, it has sharp turnings with which no switchback railway in Lunapark could stand comparison—curves along which all the outer wheels are suspended in the air for several seconds at a time. Even upon the level ground, with its rockings and twistings, it is liable to quite comical mishaps. However, it does at last reach its goal, Inshallah!

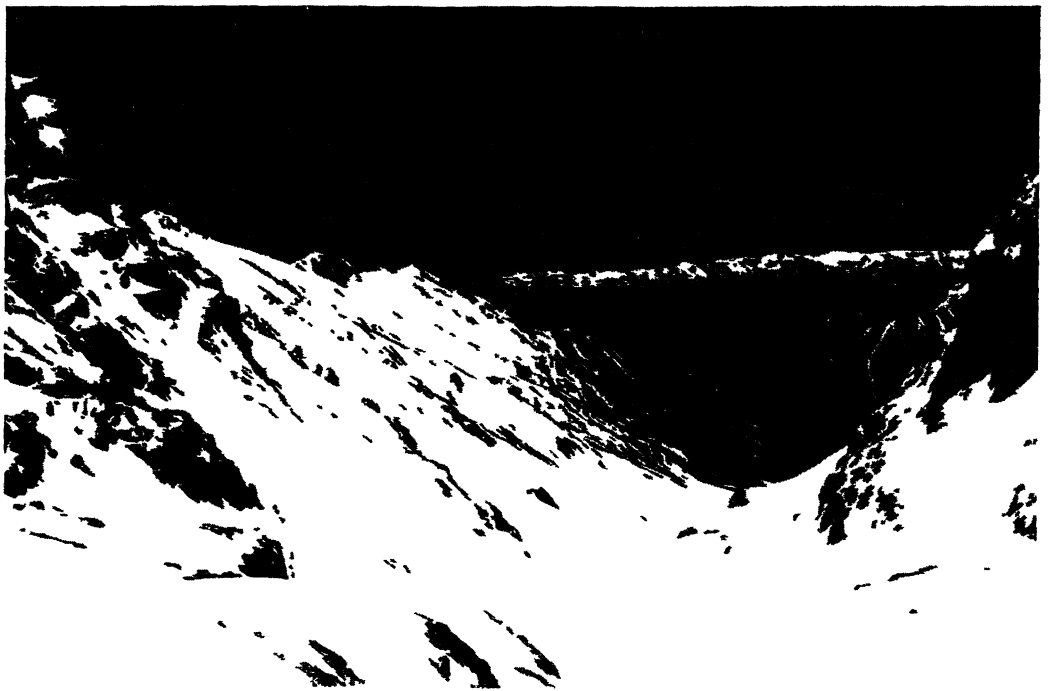
But I wanted to talk about the Father. I met him again in Erzeroum, whither, as may be gathered, he had come for a christening. In our delight at meeting we would certainly once more have ridden the machine up the Palandöken, if

the chain had not got broken and a number of the spokes gone! As on this occasion wood could not be turned to account, and as I could come upon only four strong motor-cycle spokes anywhere in the town, the Father himself went out on an exploring expedition. In an old clothes and bric-a-brac bazaar—the "lice-market," as it is called—in which the Kurdish peasants obtain their best clothes—old uniforms of French generals, for instance—as well as rusty nails and broken pots, he purchased a torn umbrella. Triumphantly he waved before my eyes this victorious bargain. "The old frame will give us excellent spokes!" he declared. We put the two types of spokes in dactylically—thick, thin, thin,—thick, thin, thin,—in perfect sequence. This imparted yet another touch of individuality to the wheel. But we could find no satisfactory substitute for the broken screws of the baggage-carrier; and therefore from now on I had to be continually unbuckling and unloading, then getting the bearer right again, then reloading and buckling once more—perhaps fifty times a day—until in Persia I became practised in the use of that universal remedy, wire, with which I learnt to mend everything from broken straps to broken spectacles.

* * *

Erzeroum is full of Progress, if it does not yet know how to turn Progress to the best account. For instance, the Military Band! It comprises many musicians, many good instruments, and, unlike most Oriental infantry, the soldiers here keep time with the music. Granted this music is nothing but a bare rhythm: ta-tata-ta! Without harmony, without melody, but with wonderful unison, the clarinets, trumpets, trombones and horns play nothing but the same C sharp for hours together—an interminable concert on one note.

But as I once had to live through the Appassionata à la Turque in the Conservatoire in Constantinople, I prudently abstained here from suggesting any changes!



VIEW ON THE HEIGHTS OF THE LAST PONTUS RANGE

I found it more to my taste to look into the matter of the brown coal supplies of Erzeroum. An inhabitant invited me to look at his cuttings which he was making on the mountain-side. After having worked 150 metres into the mountain, he came upon the brown coal. Judging by the direction of the strata, it was easy to reckon that the tunnels should reach the coal 100 metres before their end, and I therefore advised him to cut a side-trench at this point. It was, I could see, only Oriental politeness that made him follow my counsel, for earth-treasures have their abode only in the mysterious twilight of the recesses of the mountains. The idea of finding them so near the profane surface! What children these Germans were! When, therefore, the brown coal was found that same day at the spot indicated, Erzeroum honoured me as a world-seer! These clever Germans were able to smell out the coal right through the earth! And the French Bank Director, who constituted the European colony, remarked to me with a smile: "The Germans lost the war, but they have won the sympathies of the world."

* * *

I proceeded eastwards. The first stopping-place on the way to Kars was Hasan Kale, a Turkish watering-place. It is a good place, because the healing waters of the mineral wells run here into extensive pools, and it is a cheap place, because you live in your tent instead of in an hotel. While we sat together in the prickling water, an old habitué complained to me of his malady—it was bad and obstinate, he said; he couldn't get rid of it. "You should only spend half an hour in the water, my friend," I said to him, "if you want to get well." He laughed in a superior way. "That's what I do; I stay here for a fortnight and I sit ten hours in the bath every day. That makes up enough half-hour baths for three-quarters of a year." Suddenly the surface of the water broke into short, agitated waves. Startled, I wanted to

jump out. "Don't move!" the old man said to me reassuringly. "These little earthquakes occur here daily in the summer. And down in the village the houses might come down on your head."

* * *

Second stopping-place: Kara Urgan. At sunrise I stole down and, after putting the motor-cycle through the usual tests, I washed my head and breast under the well. Suddenly I saw all the men and women of the village peering at me curiously from behind corners and doors. "They are not familiar here with such ultra-refined cleanliness," the village schoolmaster said to me. "But the Russians who were here for a whole year?" I asked. "Oh, they soon became acclimatized!"

* * *

Good roads remain as traces of the Russians, however. And what a pleasure to be able to travel as swiftly as at home! But, hallo! an obstacle in our path—a deep watercourse! The quality of the roads is first-class, but it is a quality of the day before yesterday. They have had no time to look after them since the Russians went, and the road-making machines lie rusting along the route, robbed bit by bit of all their worth. First the passers-by took their magnetos, then their carburettors, then all their most valuable metal bits. I took five screws from one of them—the only useful things it still possessed. But he who has no talent for theft gets little good out of it—the screws were too large!

* * *

In this region, which formerly belonged to the Russians, European fashions and Oriental disregard for time make a strange contrast continually. Dainty villages which might belong to Lausitz rather than to Turkey alternate with

devastated areas and heaps of debris. And both are shut in by firs and beeches, a dense forest of them—an unhoped-for blessing after the score or so of miserable little trees which I had come upon in the course of the last 300 miles. Naturally, the inhabitants of the neighbouring regions vie with the railway in the consumption of wood without a thought for re-afforestation. Looking at the wide clearances made by their axes, the fortunate denizens of Sarykamysch say in reply to every objection: "Our wood will last for ever."

* * *

Along this road, covered with a layer of glass-like obsidian, we sped so delightfully that I almost ran down the hawks, which were for ever hopping about in front of the machine. So swiftly did I fare that in no time I found myself in the burning heat of the Araxes valley—far away from the road to Kars. In front of a saw-mill an unveiled woman, talking with me quite boldly, showed me the way. Then, suddenly, I saw a man spying on me from behind the door of the house. Mashallah!—the husband! I could almost imagine the feel of his dagger between my ribs—I was about to make a hasty move. But he came forward laughing. "We Tartar Turks," he said, "are not like those down below," pointing contemptuously towards the west. "We have learnt that a free woman is a better comrade for a man."

* * *

The Russians had carried civilization as far as Kars also, but to-day the most modern dwellings there are being used as firewood, beam by beam, chip by chip, in the only habitable room of the house! What does it matter if the stove devours the whole building? Next year, you can take another—there are so many empty! The Orient rules once more over the ruins of the Days of Greatness, the burnt-down homes of the Revolution, and the colonies of the Russians: an Orient,

moreover, of noteworthy activity, for the inhabitants of Kars have already set themselves up as a match for the world. That was when they perceived that neither the Turkish nor the Armenian Government knew fully how to esteem their worth. It was then they constituted overnight a free Republic of their own which was not content with the appropriate name of "Kars and Neighbourhood," but assumed the formidable title of "West Caucasian Republic!" The alarming new creation proceeded to assert itself further by two other actions: it instituted a little army wherewith to defy its two neighbouring Powers and (for it understood *la haute politique* also) it sent an embassy to the Versailles Congress. Then, unfortunately, the English Government called the West Caucasian Republic to order and handed it over to Armenia. To-day it is under Turkey.

But the gallant soldiers of Kars need no telling how to defend themselves alike against foes and not-foes. So a friendly Hungarian and I were to find out when we returned on the motor-cycle from a visit to a dairy. Just before we reached the town, my companion drew my attention to the fact that someone had called out to us. I paid no attention, being accustomed to the aphoristic outbursts of Oriental passers-by and being, moreover, urged on by my appetite for supper. In the very next second, something went amiss with the motor and simultaneously I heard the sharp report of a shot. I got off. The chain of the wheel lay in pieces on the road, while not far behind us there stood, in a state of excitement over this heroic deed, a soldier with his smoking gun. We were about to take him forcibly by the collar as a preliminary measure, while considering what to do next, when another man, a non-commissioned officer, suddenly appeared and took our breath away with the words: "Your papers, please!" Truly a great personage to be able to have people fired at in this way at his will and pleasure! But he looked disappointed when he glanced through my papers

and found nothing wrong. We proceeded to point out to him with feeling that it was a marvel neither of us was killed and that the bullet hit the chain in between our feet. Upon which he replied coolly: "Well, but that is all to the good! You can see from this how splendidly the Turkish soldier works. I just wanted to get to know you and gave this sharpshooter the order to smash the chain—in between your feet."

* * *

Beschkov followed me from Erzeroum to Kars on a passenger-car. His mission was really concluded at Erzeroum, but whoever has learnt to know the Positive Orient, Turkey, will want also to know something of the Comparative, Persia —the Superlative, Afghanistan, was to be reserved for me alone.

I could not refuse my companion's petition to be allowed to come along to Persia. Through Russian territory he could not go, being a Bulgarian, but there remained for him the possibility of travelling to Tabriz by passenger-car and mail-coach, the director of a motor-car company at Erzeroum, with whom we had made friends, having given us an introduction to the director at Kars. Unluckily this gentleman was the deadly enemy of his colleague at Erzeroum, so that our introduction had negative results and there was no place in any motor-car for Beschkov. The director's chauffeur, however, who was less hot in the feud than his master, let me know that about 20 miles beyond Kars a place would be vacant—perhaps I could take Beschkov as far as that on the cycle? We gladly agreed. I would have to make haste and get back, he warned me, for if I did not present myself by five o'clock at the Consulate in order to get my Russian visa, I should have to postpone my own journey a week. We went humming along, made our way down the serpentine road to the Araxes, and in the villages Beschkov enquired where was the passenger-car's next stopping-place.

"Karahissar," was the reply. We quickly reached that village and, after waiting for a time in vain, enquired whether the passenger-car had been seen. "What passenger-car?" was the answer. "No passenger-car stops here." Beschkov had mistaken the name in his hurry!

So we returned to the high road. It was four o'clock when we hastened back at top speed, and stood on either side of the road with white handkerchiefs ready to wave. But the car had passed long before. Beschkov proved a stoic in his misfortune, merely declaring when we took farewell of each other: "Another car will soon turn up!" Shouldering his knapsack, he set out quite cheerfully towards the great desert plains of the east.

I chased back to Kars, reaching the Consulate only at two minutes to five. From Beschkov I heard nothing for weeks. After he had traversed Aserbeidschan, partly on foot, partly by horse-cart, I was to meet him again at the customs barrier of Tabriz.

* * *

Owing to Customs-house requirements, I had to go from Kars to Leninakan by the Turkish train which every week takes its eight to twelve passengers and two cases of cheese over the frontier. "Sell the motor-cycle!" I was urged. "The Bolsheviks have no taste for that kind of thing—when it does not belong to them." But I disregarded this advice. We had scarcely reached Armenian soil when Customs officials boarded the train to inspect it thoroughly. Baggage was overhauled, clothes and boots felt, the windows and lamps of the compartments examined. The engine-driver had even to unload his firewood! Nothing was to be found. But between the parts of the engine, when taken asunder, were discovered rolls of cloth. In the Customs-house office there was quite a shopful of contraband articles from Turkey: different kinds of cloth, silk stockings, shoes, perfumes, any

amount of tea, photographic materials, Odol, ink, boot-blacking!

Here in the "Tomoschna" of Leninakan I waited in vain for the officer in command of the political police, the fear-inspiring G.P.U. At last I set the motor-cycle in motion and went to fetch him. "Your books?" He looked through my portfolio: *Geology of Armenia*, *Guide for Explorers*. Presently he came upon a couple of German plays and scores of operas. "You have my favourite pieces here. Will you be my guest?"

* * *

Leninakan. Everything seems to be as usual, shops, street-vendors, motor-cars and beggars. But for one simple Russian cap I had to pay five roubles. My friends were astonished at the high price. "But didn't you bargain?" Bargaining in Russia!—in a communistic State!

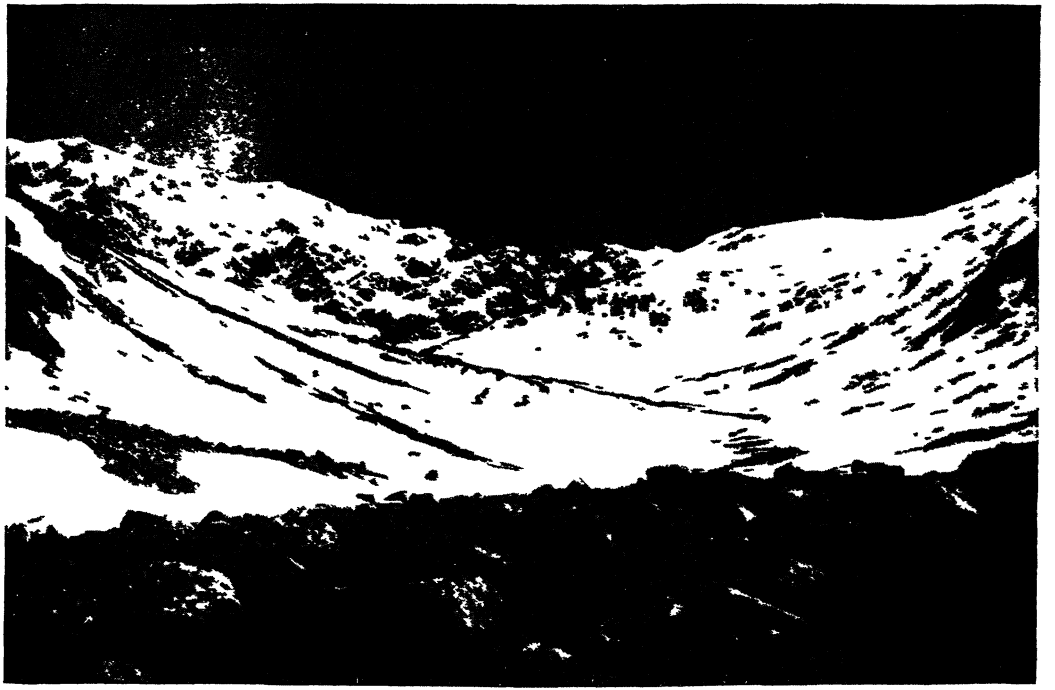
The building enterprises in progress here were of the same order as everywhere in Russia: a great park with the unavoidable memorials in honour of Marx and Lenin, schools, a canal and—sure enough—the Textiles Manufactory—the Russian "atonement-gift!" The tale runs thus. In the course of great Russian-Armenian manoeuvres the Russians were terribly defeated, whereupon some of them, turning play into grim earnest, "went for" their victors with the bayonet! This called forth strong feelings throughout Armenia. Suddenly there came a telegram from Moscow: "You will receive a Textiles Manufactory as a token of victory." *No karascho!* (That's good!)

In the "Comrades' Club" restaurant, the food is good and dear. Youths of sixteen, as assured in their bearing as though they had been frequenting restaurants for decades past, give up their tickets; the friends whom they join are already at their fifth bottle of wine and have been complaining of the waiter, who is soundly beaten by the manager. "What

do you mean really by the name 'Comrades' Club'?" I asked. "Oh, a group of people who have found the money for running the restaurant and who get the profits." "What! A limited company of the capitalistic kind!" "Well, yes," came the hesitating reply. In truth, the perspective has altered rather than the actualities. When, before beginning my meal, I sought to hide my rough mechanic's hands in my lap, one of the company lifted them up and put them on the table cloth. "You should rather be proud of them, Doctor!" he said, smiling. "In this country, that sort of thing is the strongest recommendation!"

Incomparably beautiful was the journey through the wood from Leninakan onwards over well-made European roads. While resting, I got talking in Russian with two peasants. One of them said to the other: "You are always bragging about your German. Now's your chance! Talk German with him!" The poor fellow looked very much embarrassed, but he was ready-witted and with a half-supplicating, half-humorous look at me, he rose to the occasion with some such sounds as "Schiapulralasweija." I entered into the fun of the thing and answered him with the requisite seriousness in the same kind of lingo. Whereupon he turned triumphantly to his companion and said: "You see, I asked him what he thought of my apples and he said he thought them splendid!" And the happy linguist proceeded to fill all my pockets with apples that really were splendid. The other fellow nodded his head to me and said: "Your mother-tongue sounds very fine!"

For hour after hour I was able to glide down the unending valley without using the motor, then for hour after hour it would be in action, working up one serpentine gradient after another—perhaps fifty or so in all—until we reached the Gotschka Lake. The leaden-hued water seemed to stretch out for ever between bare, rocky precipices, the grimness of which was uncannily heightened by the dark sky above.



VIEW NEAR THE TAOS PASS

An island with an Armenian monastery on it alone had a friendly aspect. I got off and went down to the shore. I called out. A monk ferried me across. " You are supposed," I said presently, " to have the best trout in the world here, but I believe those of our Alpine waters are better still." Laughing, he took me back in his boat.

* * *

Armenia, which is resolved to collect together the fragments of a race hunted about from country to country for century after century, must now be the land which suffers beyond all others from a scarcity of homes. Its towns are over-populated, its villages are packed together without breathing space, houses are being built of canvas, corrugated iron, and even out of the branches of creepers, and the condition of their inmates is lamentable. Such is the aspect of the region whose exiled sons and daughters yearn for it as their Land of Promise.

Unmoved by the changing fortunes of its people, their poverty or their industry, Ararat, the snow-clad Colossus, enveloped in his wreath of clouds, looks down unchangingly.

* * *

The darkness of evening overtook me before I reached Erivan. As my lamp had gone out long before, I should have had to spend the night out in the open had it not been for a motor-car which was going in my direction and by whose lights I was able to see my way. In vain its Armenian driver plied his hooter and drove quicker and quicker, in order to get the foreign night-bird out of his path ; I only increased my pace accordingly. Thus speeding along, paying hardly any attention to our route, I suddenly found myself in the middle of the central promenade of Erivan, in which the inhabitants enjoy the cool of the evening to the strains of an excellent orchestra. Naturally the street was closed to motor traffic at this hour, so I was at once arrested ! But when I explained

that I was a German and had ridden from Trebizond, I was released and was taken in pomp and state to the hotel, where I was warmly congratulated by the leading men of the local sports club, interviewed by the reporters of three newspapers, and, as a climax, honoured with a torchlight procession !

Such was Erivan, where the Soviet's star shines above the old cathedral, but where you can have quite a civilized life if you drink the wine of Noah in its elegant hotel : Erivan the worker's Paradise, where a Silesian girl with a flaxen head upon her lap and a coal-black head against her breast will complain to you that her wages are not high enough to pay for bread, where Armenians who were prisoners of war in Austria will offer you their doubtful services as interpreter, addressing you confidently as " Comrade," where young Bolsheviks labour and grey-haired Orientals beg.

And upon Erivan, also, Ararat, the snow-clad, looks down unchangingly.

* * *

Once again I had come upon the Araxes. As straight as a die, the broad road ran through a level expanse of country, which on the right rose in the distance towards Ararat and on the left towards a serrated chain of hills, some black, some of a reddish yellow.

Then came Nachitschevan, the capital of the Tartar Republic in the S.S.S.R. I made my way into the yard of the combined mill and electricity works to get mended the slight damage done to my machine by two difficult bits of road. The charming Russian who owned the establishment spent hours over the task of mending the damaged baggage-holder and insisted in addition on my becoming his guest. He bought some of the finest wine of the Caucasus, loaded the table with the best meat and fruit the country could offer, made my feet comfortable in his soft slippers, and even handed over to me his bed with its mosquito-curtains, while he

himself lay down on the flagstones of the courtyard. To entertain me, apart from sacrificing his night's rest, he must have spent a whole week's earnings. To my urgent remonstrances he would reply only : " Allow me, my friend, the joy of looking after your welfare ! "

When at last I had managed to get rid of the young Armenian girl, who kept hiding her mouth with her hand shyly—only to speak the better with her coal-black eyes—and who, at his command, came back to me, still smiling, with a cup of tea, I felt I ought to give thanks to heaven for such a host. How moved one is when one comes across that finest impulse of the human heart—the impulse to do good to others even at the cost of real discomfort to oneself !

My host accompanied me to the boundary of the town and, after friendly greetings from the Red Guards, I made my way over the glowing red sandstone of the Araxes basin up to Dschulfa. Villages, railway stations and clay huts were destroyed in the war. Such human beings as survived were poisoned with malaria by the milliards of mosquitoes from the swamps. Food and lodging I secured here only in return for quinine pills ! And the people allow the quinine to melt on their tongues as though the pills were sweets, for it is believed by them that medicine can only help when it has a really bitter taste.

* * *

Thirty or forty yards behind the house, I found my laced boots, which a fierce night wind had blown away from my sleeping place on the roof. Then I started off. The baggage-holder kept jumping unceasingly from its hinges ; and, on top of all, I lost my way and had a job to keep my balance on an incredibly narrow pathway through a narrow defile, with the high rocks to the left and a torrent raging below me to the right, and with a pitiless sun sending down its rays on me from above. When this path led over great heaps of

stone, I had to make use of my box as a bridge; when it went over the stones in a river-bed, there was nothing for me to do but to put up with the inevitable jolting. When at last, hot and perspiring, bruised and shaken, I reached the Persian frontier, I felt I had escaped from an *Inferno*—an *Inferno* from which another time I might not emerge alive. And yet those few miles were but a mild prelude to the *Furioso* which Persian roads had in store for me.

# CHAPTER VI

## SAND AND SUNSHINE: THROUGH ASERBEIDSCHAN

NEAR the egress from the plain through which run the middle reaches of the Araxes, where the river narrows in its course through the Karabak mountains, lies Dschulfa, qualified by its site to be a kind of bridge for the passing of traffic between Aserbeidschan and the Caucasus. The division made by the Araxes in this two-sided city corresponds with the political frontier: on its left bank Dschulfa is under the Soviet, on the right it is Persian.

The scenery of the Dschulfa region differs in its character from that to which I had been growing accustomed. While the middle reaches of the Araxes run through a wide plain, flanked by high mountains and intersected by the other streams which flow down from them, Dschulfa lies in a broad basin, covered by sand and boulders, which is almost closed downstream. While in Europe the colours of the landscape, changing in accordance with the season, are largely modified by our vegetation and by our cloud effects, the relatively rainless Orient is dependent for colouring on its rocks and stones, which, however, display great variety in the intensity of the sunlight. Here as elsewhere I had before me the threefold colour scheme once again—the dark green eruptive rock, the red conglomerate, the white chalk, all glittering in the sun which radiated a burning heat over the whole countryside. Through its situation so far inland, away from the sea, Dschulfa is one of the hottest localities in the Aserbeidschan uplands, and life would be unbearable here in the summer

were it not that a sharp wind sets in during the early hours of the afternoon.

Soviet Dschulfa was a great disappointment to me. In every direction, shining in the sun's merciless rays, were to be seen debris from fires, tumbled-down houses, streets laid waste—a picture of wretchedness which spoke eloquently of the years of war and revolution. The railway station building, half in ruins and patched together as best might be with the most primitive materials, formed a melancholy contrast to the ambitious character of the railway system generally. Only here and there stood isolated new European buildings, such as the Bank. And so Dschulfa presented itself as a symbol of the entire life of the Caucasus of to-day: modest remnants of a national culture which the great storms of the war and the revolution forgot to sweep away, and, side by side with them, relics of the culture of the Tsars carried over in some measure into the new life unaltered, but for the most part laid in ruins, which are being patched together by hook or by crook, and, finally, isolated creations of the Bolshevik era which—unlike the Tsarist buildings—display a faculty for blending the soft Oriental-Caucasian style with a strong individual style of their own.

Persian Dschulfa, on the other side of the dirty yellow Araxes, offers a very different picture: widely-spread-out caravanserais with shady colonnades, airy, bright-windowed villas of the rich, standing in cool gardens, finally the clay hovels of the poor and the narrow bazaar—all based upon the oldest culture of the Orient and all equally untouched by the horrors of war and the effects of civilization; harmonious in its peaceful timelessness in contrast with the ebb and flow of the development of the other Dschulfa: the sole indication of European influence being the railway and the road which lead over the dividing river into Persia.

In the hotel I met the notabilities of Russian Dschulfa, men of the world full of talent and efficiency: the Tartar

Commissary of Police, the Russian bank director, who declared smilingly that his astronomical studies had stood him in good stead when dealing with the figures of inflated currencies, and his deputy, who had attained his Doctorate of Philosophy in Heidelberg. We discussed politics—an inexhaustible theme in Russia. How strange are the workings of the Communist mind! Their world dates its existence only from the War; what existed before is for them no longer alive. Men without traditions,—in their preoccupation with their building up of the completest possible present, their mental centre of gravity lies in the future, which they see in shining colours.

In the evening we attended the Communistic fête in commemoration of the two years' Bolshevik rule over Dschulfa. An address was delivered which told of the civilizing work of the Russians, and the achievements of which we heard in the way of reconstruction were truly astonishing. The *chef d'œuvre* of the new régime, however, lies doubtless in the fact that there is no longer any racial problem here, whereas hitherto in these parts, where Armenians, Kurds, and Russians intermingled, that problem seemed insoluble. Everyone delivered his speech in the language he knew best, the interpreters then giving the gist of it in other languages. Immediately in front of the tribune children were playing about and shouting, while in the front row an Armenian mother was suckling her baby. It all seemed quite natural.

When you cross over from the sphere of the S.S.S.R. into Persia by the bridge, you are confronted with a complicated system. My baggage, which I had sent on by rail from Leninakan, had first to be put on an ox-waggon and taken to the bridge, to pass the Russian Customs house; then bearers took up the boxes and carried them to the middle of the bridge, where they handed them over to their Persian colleagues, who in their turn handed them over to the Persian Customs-house. It would be difficult to devise a more

complicated system of traffic within a compass of a few hundred yards.

I now rode in a south-westerly direction, to Koi, in order to study in western Aserbeidschan the transition of Armenian scenery into that of Iran. And I found everything worked out in a fashion to delight a geographer's heart. The character of the scenery underwent its modification with almost mathematical precision, discarding its old features and adopting new ones, until at last it developed gradually into the Persian type—that of the desert.

I had been sitting in the shadow of my machine, so absorbed in my drawings and note-taking that I had not marked how the sun was steadily approaching his zenith and shedding down upon the steppe a heat that burned. Now for the second time the wonder of the light of Persia came home to me. I gazed around me, marvelling. In the glaring white of the noon the landscape to which I had grown used suddenly became strangely foreign—an immeasurable ocean of light. The mountain range hard by, which in the morning mist had been enshrouded in a bluish veil, now threw back the sun's rays. As far as the eye could see the mountains glowed in one or other of their two colourings—the dark hues of the eruptive stone and the red of the conglomerate. The indescribably brilliant sunshine enveloped the whole scene—here were no soft blendings, no faint blue atmospheric effect.

I made haste to move. As the way back to Dschulfa and thence on to the main road to the south could tell me nothing new, I was glad when a carrier, who was driving his horse-cart to Urmia, assured me that the road from Koi to Marand was *tschok jakchy*—"very good." I might hope, therefore, soon to reach the main road at Marand and to be in Tabriz by the evening.

I knew, of course, that this route would lead me through the dangerous steppe of Koi, where the previous year a

EAST PONTUS HOMESTEADS

journalist attached to the Schmude colonizing expedition had nearly lost his life. But relying firmly on my machine, I started out. Bitterly were my hopes to be disappointed. The road became worse and worse. It was almost impossible for me to keep my balance on the machine. I ploughed through the knee-deep sand, until at last I swayed and tumbled. I did not hurt myself much, it is true, as I had gradually mastered the art of falling innocuously, but there were too many such tumbles and the lifting up of the cycle after each became most fatiguing. Moreover I was wasting a lot of my precious petrol, for I was using twice the usual quantity. What made things worse still was that I had bent my kick-starter, so that I had to shove the machine until the motor began to work.

At last, I reached a stretch where there lay between the gully and the sandy road a somewhat firmer footpath, but it was perilous going, for the slightest loss of balance might precipitate me into the depths. I felt that in this fashion I would never reach my goal, so I resolved to travel right across the steppe. One might meet with obstacles on ahead, but the ground was firmer and the exhausting tumbles would be less frequent.

Soon my watch began to ring its alarm. I got off, set up the machine and began to overhaul it carefully. I kept up this habit of carefully examining it after every two hours of riding throughout my entire journey. As I demanded more of my motor-cycle than other people, I felt called upon to care for it more thoroughly. Now more than ever I knew that my life was dependent upon it and yet this knowledge had nothing in it which alarmed me. The from-one-adventure-to-another sort of existence that I was leading had so bound up my motor-cycle and me together that I thought of it almost as part of my own flesh and blood—I felt towards it as a Centaur may have felt towards the animal half of his body. By dint of attention and unceasing observation I had learnt

to gauge to a nicety the power of resistance of my machine, I knew every sound of the motor, every idiosyncracy of the framework and the wheels. Thus I was able to venture upon rides on it which to anyone else might have seemed impossible.

My machine had become for me a thing so alive that I had begun to talk to it as to a friend. I knew every tone of its three different gears. At a given point it should sing in C Sharp, at the next in D Sharp—if it did not do so, it was out of sorts. . . .

The sun was shooting down its burning rays. At moments a gust of air so hot would strike my face as almost to stifle me ; if I fell and knocked up against a stone, it burnt my skin. Endless loneliness all around. The prickly camel-weed clung in dense masses to the ground, its viscous roots so binding the sand beneath it that while the winds swept away the ground all around it it stood out as though upon a hillock. The surface of the steppe acquires in this way a pock-marked aspect. I had to wind in and out between these mole-hill formations and the blocks and splinters of stone which lay strewn about.

Suddenly there appeared in the distance a form coming in wild haste towards me. In the rarefied air I was soon able to make it out : it was a man riding a camel which was covered with sweat and which he was urging on to its utmost speed. In spite of its exhaustion, the animal retained its noble bearing as it rushed along, raising clouds of dust behind it. The man's clothes hung in disorder from his body ; his turban—normally the Oriental's ornament, arranged with care and pride—was dirty and disordered ; his gestures were wild and excitable and his eyes burned. At last the apparition was face to face with me. " Water ! Water ! " was the only word he could give forth, hoarsely and piteously. I was amazed : an Oriental asking for water from me, an unclean unbeliever ! My thermos flask was only one-third full, my route through the barren steppe was longer than his, and

perhaps my life depended upon these few drops of lukewarm water. But I filled the cup silently and gave it to the rider. In a moment a trembling hand stretched out again—" More ! " No, I said to myself, this self-sacrifice would be madness. But I could utter no words. Our eyes met in silent conflict. " More ! "—in his unbearable need he was too strong for me. I gave him a second cup. Once again—" More ! " But a sense of self-preservation in me now asserted itself. There was but a mouthful left in the flask—I drank it off. Without a word the rider turned and made away—not a sign of thanks did he give me. He rode off wildly, feverishly. I gazed after him. This was not just a poor Tartar gone astray on the Steppe of Koi—it was *the* Man of the Wilds ! I shuddered.

At last I pulled myself together and remounted my machine. It went humming along. The effect on me was cheerful and encouraging. We would come through.

Suddenly, however, I had to stop. In front of me lay a river bed choked up with mud. In vain I looked about for a possible crossing-place. Get over it I must, and there was no time to lose. I began laying down stones at the point where it was driest, carried my baggage over to the opposite bank and then, taking a run, tried to race over it with my machine at full speed. But we got stuck before we were a quarter of the way across. I had to pull it back so that I might take another run and get the machine started on the dry ground. Meanwhile the vertical rays of the sun were coming down pitilessly. I tore off my coat and shirt and splashed water over myself.

Urged on by keen anxiety, I made another effort to pull the motor-cycle through the swamp. Running alongside the clattering machine, I could see how the fore wheel, like a snow-plough, forced its way into the morass while the hind wheel, in spite of the straps with which I had tied up the tyres, kept sliding. I shoved and pushed with all my strength without being able to move the machine forward

a centimetre—my desperate efforts had the result merely of forcing it still deeper. Creaking and clattering, the two wheels merely spun round on the same spot until they were half buried in the mire, and I stood by, stupefied by my inability to do anything useful. Unless a miracle happened from outside, nothing could save us.

I ran up to the top of the nearest hill in the senseless and yet almost confident expectation of seeing some kind of man on the lonely steppe—some man who would save my machine and thereby my own life. As I stood up there on the summit I almost broke down at the sight of the pitiless emptiness which met my eyes. No living being, no breath of air brought a movement into this glaring and broiling land of death. . . .

To the left stood a circle of low hills, crowned by masses of burst rock. In a wide bend sank a valley the slopes of which were at places cut into gullies by the torrents of the autumn and winter. On the other side rose higher chains of mountains with sharply defined ridges. Everything glistened in the tremulous hot breeze coming up from the valley. While I was noting all this there came back irresistibly to my brain the most irrational ideas of rescue, which, however, my cool observations rejected. I said to myself I should make my way to the next village and get help there. But how should I muster strength for a day's march? And what would come to my machine and baggage? Perhaps, after all, I should do better to wait on the chance of someone passing? Yet days might elapse before a caravan came this way. . . .

Slowly and despondently I returned to the place of my mishap. On arriving there my heart stood still. My machine was almost buried in the mud and was sinking into it deeper and deeper, almost visibly!

Forgotten was my fatigue, forgotten my crippling apathy. I rushed to the rescue. With a strength only attainable in the extremity of desperation, I pulled and pulled at the back

wheel until at last I had got it up and had the machine lying flat upon the slime. Now it was safe for the moment as, so lying, it offered greater resistance. Meanwhile I myself had been sinking deeper. I was in the mud now up to the hips and every movement made things worse. I stood still a moment and reflected. Carefully I took out my knife and slashed open my high laced-boots as well as I could manage in the mire. At last I managed to get myself out. I then wound the strips of leather and the laces round the machine, carried the end of the line on to the bank and began to tug at it. In vain! The machine, as though it had become part and parcel of the mud, would not budge from its place. Not until I had wound the end of the straps round my body and made a sort of sudden rush backwards with it did the machine move a few inches. . . . When I did get it up to the bank I had only just strength enough left to set it up in order again. Then, worn out, I lay down and fell into a sleep of utter exhaustion.

When I woke up, the sun was giving forth its last fire-golden rays on the horizon. I was free! The indescribable feeling of relief that came over me from consciousness of this gave me new strength. I shoved along the cycle and forward we went over the steppe as before, now crossing dried-up river beds, now hindered by sharp stones. Every now and again I stumbled and fell. When darkness had come, I fell badly at one place—into a kind of crevice and the machine with its full weight on top of me. A small flame leapt up—the petrol escaping from the carburettor had taken fire. Instinctively at such moments a man attains a cold-blooded calm. I twisted off the petrol-cock, removed the motor, and put out the quickly increasing fire with sand. Only then could I attend to my clothes, which had caught fire too and were smouldering. The whole thing, of course, was the work of a minute or two and it was not until the danger was past that I realized what an escape I had had. My limbs

shook and I could not mount the cycle, so I laid it down and myself beside it and tried to sleep.

I awoke in the night. The stars shone out as clearly as on a frosty night in winter ; even those far-distant worlds seemed to my eyes disquietingly near. A jackal was howling. A fresh breeze was sweeping over the steppe and beneath it the sand was moving with a noise like glass in ashes. My mouth was parched. I tried to utter a word or two out loud but my tongue clove to my palate. I dragged myself along over the sand, on the look-out for water. In vain. I tore off every scrap of clothing in order to let the pores of my skin drink in the cool air. The blood beat wildly in my temples. I lay down again, and again slept.

A new morning. The burning pain in my temples grew worse steadily. Now I began to wonder how, with the small quantity of petrol left to me, I should ever reach the road. Once I reached it I should be all right, for cars would be passing. But how could I get so far ? Shutting off the petrol-cock, I shoved the cycle along, utterly apathetic. I would just go on as well as I could and then lay me down and die ! What did it matter ?

At last I seemed to see something a-glitter in the sand. Water ! It was slimy and dark brown but I lapped it up greedily. Then I lay down in it and when I got up again the pressure of the air upon my wet clothes gave me a sense of well-being. . . .

The fates were kind to me. Against every rule a fresh breeze now set in. It was blowing from behind me as I rode and it aroused in me a boyish desire to experiment with the leather straps and strings. I tied my cinema apparatus stand to the baggage-holder, stretched a piece of tent-cloth across, and went ahead successfully as a new kind of motor-skiff !

If the wind was not strong enough to drive the machine unaided, it lightened the work of the motor and, by increasing

our speed, saved me a lot of petrol. In spite of everything, however, the motor broke down some four miles before I reached Marand. . . .

Once again, just outside Marand, the motor struck work. Helped by a succession of friendly Persians, I pushed the machine along until we reached the bazaar, where I threw myself down on a bench in the nearest khan and slept for several hours. It was well on in the afternoon when I awoke, and then the whole village collected round me, all curiosity and sympathy, while we stood awaiting a motor-car which might spare me some petrol. But we waited in vain. At last I was advised to go on to the next village where the road engineer had a car. The eight miles or so of road which led to it went, indeed, over a mountain pass, but a helpful Persian declared he was ready to drag me up there behind his waggon on my cycle. So I hitched the machine on and he drew me up. In the morning a motor-sailor on the steppe and now trailed behind a cart on the highway!

By dint of much persuasion I got some petrol out of the engineer and then proceeded along the road which went along the Dschulfa-Tabriz railway line. In spite of occasional little tricks and peculiarities it was a good road to travel on and, after the things I had experienced, I felt as though I were moving on asphalt. There was not much traffic on it, for the transport of goods which is generally the business of caravans is undertaken here by the railway. To the right I saw something shining. It was the Urmia lake, and in front of me something grey set in green—it was Tabriz. As I reached the town the sun was smiling in a splendour of red and gold.

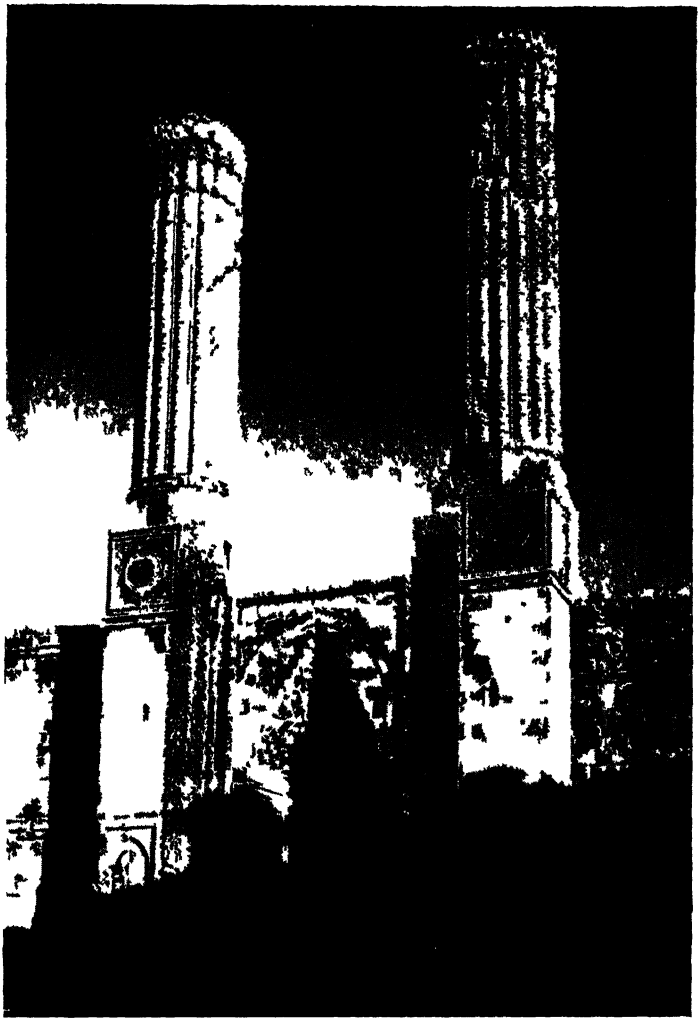
While I was talking with a guard at the Customs barrier someone called out to me by name: it was Beschkov, who had arrived an hour before. Joyfully we agreed as to a hotel and I went on ahead. I had scarcely entered it when a tall, elegantly dressed man came up to me. "Are you a German?"

he asked, and proceeded to explain that he was a German merchant settled in Tabriz. His sympathetic personality attracted me at once and we were soon good friends.

In Tabriz the inhabitants were moving about in great numbers. What struck my attention most were the numerous processions of the same kind as that which I had come across in Dschulfa. In their external aspect they differed but little from our Catholic processions in Germany, but what a fanatical devotion there was in the eyes, in the voices, in the rapturous shouts and even in the gestures of these believers! If in other places the Orientals had pressed around me to look curiously at my miraculous machine, these people did not give it so much as a fleeting glance; if in other places friendly villagers had been eager to get into conversation with me, as inquisitive and communicative as children, these Persians seemed as gloomy and silent as though they were under the influence of some personal sorrow.

All day long they went singing like a single organism, all animated by the same breath, following the priest with swift steps, their eyes fixed unswervingly upon the black flag or with visionary gaze staring straight ahead. Thrown into ecstasy by the one single rhythm which made it into one single body, the procession marched up the burning, sandy road while all repeated the mournful dirge intoned by the chief singer, until at last they ended with an ear-shattering cry full of wild accusation—*Schachssé-wachssé!* And then the mysterious procession disappeared in clouds of dust.

In the evening, however, when the sun was setting, the same spectacle was to be seen everywhere again. To the sound of muffled drum-taps all the inhabitants of the village assembled together and set up their strange, unmelodious, long-drawn dirge. At intervals allegorical performances took place, detached scenes affectingly and artistically enacted, but so strange to a foreigner that one could not attempt to understand them. The deep and intense sadness of those who



RUINED MOSQUE IN TIZIPOUM

looked on at these performances with tears pouring from their eyes deterred me from asking profane questions—to which indeed no answer might have been given. Long after midnight they were still packed together so closely, ever intoning new dirges, in time with which the men beat on the ground with sticks and swords; and almost until morning there continued to be given forth at regular intervals the complaining cry—*Schachssé-wachssé!*

We had sat talking in the house of my compatriot long into the night. Now I wanted to go and I asked my host to show me the town next morning. He replied: "Let us leave that until later. You have come here at just the right time. To-morrow morning we shall have other things to see." Before my eyes I still had the strange, mournful sights which I had been witnessing, so almost against my will I asked: "What is the meaning of this *Schachssé-wachssé?*" He took me by the arm and said: "Come. Let us go for a stroll through the streets while it is still night. That will be the right atmosphere for the things of which I shall tell you and which you will be seeing to-morrow."

A gentle night breeze was blowing through the silent town, and as it blew past it made the lighted candles flicker where they stood in front of the houses and made the black flags which hung down in every direction fly open. Gleams of silver caught one's eye from all sorts of strange symbols. The soft summer night seemed to be mysteriously a-thrill.

And my friend began to tell me about Schiitism, the religion to which the Persians are so attached, that sect of Islamism which offers adoration to Ali and his son as the true successors of the Prophet, of Hussein, the Hero of the Schiites, who was cheated out of the Caliphate, and of his tragic attempt to win back the mastery in battle. "The day of mourning of the anniversary of Hussein's death is called here *Schachssé-wachssé* after the great cry of lamentation which goes forth over the whole land on this occasion. The words are probably

a corruption of ' Shah Hussein, Wah Hussein,' Wah meaning Woe. Most of the believers do not themselves know what the words mean. And yet the fervour with which the Persians utter the cry and celebrate the whole festival is so intense that no one now reflects that the whole manifestation is rooted in a lifeless and senseless superstition. You will yourself learn here to understand how unnecessary knowledge and reasoning are to the believer from the moment he allows himself to be carried away by the tremendous power of his belief."

We passed the garden of a mosque. The wind wafted to us here the sound of heart-broken sobbing—unrestrained sobbing like that of children. " That," my friend explained, " is the women who are now sitting together in the mosque garden. The Mullah is telling them about Hussein's death. You have no idea how impressively these priests tell the story : the dying hero, mortally wounded in the fight—his white horse, flecked with blood, returning riderless from the battlefield—the last of the defeated soldiers riding back at night over the desert in such deep silence that even the stars go pale out of sympathy. It is difficult for Europeans to understand the intensity of feeling with which every year the Persians live over again the tragic end of Hussein. Throughout all the period of the festival the Schiites have only the one thought, one feeling : embodied in this wail : *Schachssé-wachssé*. *Muharhem*, as the festival is called, has been going on for nine days now, and in a few hours the greatest day of all will begin, the tenth day of *Muharhem*. It is the anniversary of Kerbela, when at last, after a long, slow intensification from a mood of dark melancholy to spasms of unbridled misery, the emotions of thousands are given full vent. I shall say no more about this to-night. Early to-morrow I shall come and fetch you "

Thanks to the excellent discipline of the Rhizo-Chanschen troops we Europeans sat in the box of the Government

Building out of harm's way. The Festival Day ran its course before our eyes like a weird, bewildering film, or, rather, like a never-ending succession of mournful pictures, uniform in tone ; for there was a complete lack of the dramatic development and intensification which mark the religious festivals of the Catholic Church. The same kind of scenes recurred over and over again with only slight modifications. But while this has merely a wearying effect upon Europeans, the feelings of the Oriental are wrought by it up to a high pitch of emotion.

People came streaming from every direction to the Government Square, which was decorated for the occasion. Everywhere one saw black flags waving, their poles adorned with the silver hand of the Prophet—a hand raised in symbolism of an Oath, the chief emblem of the Schiites. Alternating with lamps and candles and black cloths, were placed other symbols of high artistic quality, but for most of the Persians themselves these things are meaningless and dead, and it is only through the force of tradition that they survive as sacred but insoluble riddles.

Soon there was a gathering of many thousands. In marked contrast with their state of suppressed excitement was the easy-going demeanour of the surgeons who, standing about in groups dressed in white mantles, smoked and talked unconcernedly about the work which would presently be occupying them. Under the supervision of the Chief of Police, the military kept excellent order among the steadily growing throng : the front rows had to squat so as not to shut out the spectacle from those behind, and any who ventured to break the cordon were at once driven back with blows from the butt ends of the guns. Upon the roofs of the adjoining houses veiled women sat in silent suspense. The more distinguished of them had seats in tents. Many of the Persians present regarded themselves as much too enlightened to take part in the weird procession, but many of them had

hired some poor believer for the day to tread the thorny path of the mourner's procession in their place, and even the most advanced of all would not have ventured to refuse his subscriptions to the priest for the fête.

Suddenly there was a movement among the crowd. From the arched passage out of the Bazaar came in a strange sort of rhythm the sound of muffled drum-taps. Then followed quickly the blare of a trumpet. That was the horn that called for blood! The crowd, seized by a feeling of wild excitement, sprang up and began moving towards the Bazaar entrance. While the military with shouts and blows enforced order again, there issued from the Bazaar the sounds of a restrained murmuring, and then a line of men came forth from the dark archway. They all advanced in rhythmic steps, two sideway steps forward and two backward, alternately increasing their expressions of ecstasy. Each carried a big cudgel in his hand, which, keeping time with his steps, he alternately brought down with a bang on the ground and raised threateningly. Meanwhile there arose continually above the murmuring and the praying the same cry of "*Schachssé-wachssé!*"

Then followed long rows of dancing flagellants, who swung many-tailed scourges against their backs, letting them resound against the naked flesh; among them I saw some boys of ten or so, for even children vied with the adults in their wild antics and fierce scourging. The men of the next procession, attired entirely in white, now sprang forward dancing, while each, in time with the swingers of the cudgels, let the sharp blade of a short sword whistle over his smooth-shaved head. Their blood ran down in streams over their cheeks and necks and on to their white shirts; meanwhile the beaters of the drums sprang here and there in great bounds, exciting the rows of onlookers, and the trumpeter blew his trumpet stridently, now into the ear of one man, now into the ear of another.

One of the men in his frenzy had been hitting himself unceasingly on the head until the blood from his forehead gushed out over his shirt in time with the beating of his heart. His blood-stained countenance was a distorted, non-human-looking mass in which only the projecting eyes burned like torches of madness, while from his mouth came the cry—"*Schachssé-wachssé!*" Some of the soldiers ran forward to wrest the sword from him, but he resisted and continued to strike with it more and more wildly. At last some bold spirits among the audience rushed out to carry him away. Upon this a unanimous cry of exasperation went up from the whole throng, who rose *en masse*, broke the cordon and went tearing threateningly over the open square. They had had a sight of blood and wanted to see more! . . . It came home to us that if the military were overpowered the excited mob would soon be directing its violence against the box containing us Europeans!

Suddenly there was a piercing whistle, and from all the four gates of the Bazaar there streamed out a company of soldiers who rushed into the crowd and forced them back, and a few minutes later the people were sitting once again upon the ground as though nothing had happened. The man with the sword, however, now exhausted, suffered himself to be bound up by the surgeons and carried off in an ambulance. There may have been fifty or sixty such blood-bespattered White Shirts in the performance, among them children less than six years old! Their own mothers sent them into the show, for the scars on the heads of their little ones are a source of the greatest pride to them.

Now the club-swingers heralded a new procession, in the middle of which walked a patient white horse; his saddle-cloth bristled with arrows; he represented the wounded horse of Hussein. Some men, arrayed as warriors, went up to him with their hands raised reproachfully: "Suleika, where hast thou left Hussein?" And, with a sound of

jingling and clattering, long rows of sword-wielders and flagellants followed.

With great adroitness soldiers kept springing into the procession to fasten a binding round some performer who was bleeding profusely or to snatch away a sword from one who was gashing himself too violently. But the gruesomeness of the whole thing kept increasing. From one group, surrounded by wildly screaming people, three men dragged themselves out into the open square, moving forward hesitatingly and slowly, as though crippled by the most dreadful pain. From a distance it seemed to me that their breasts and loins were wound round with a double girdle which was adorned with short spikes sticking out, but one of the spectators in the front called out to those near him: "The arrows are each two spans long and the brave men have driven two rings of them into their skins." Now new rows of men were pressing forward, with breasts and bellies uncovered, striking their naked flesh with the palms of their hands so that the whole place resounded.

I felt I could stand no more of it. I begged my friend to come home. More than twenty processions had marched over the square, with from two to three hundred persons in each. So that in all some six thousand people had gone past us on their blood-stained pilgrimage of woe.

"Only five dead as yet!" one of the surgeons called out after us. From a roof-top near by we heard the sound of piercing shrieks; a child had been seized with hysterics at the sight of his father who had been disfigured by wounds. We went home silently, our nerves upset by all the hideous sights.

It is useless to try and understand the sense of these spectacles, which entail such terrible sacrifices. Shocked by the nauseous and horrible in them, the European is too apt to dismiss this creed as mere madness and barbarism. Such a verdict may be natural enough, but it is not just to the Schiites. In

regard to all such manifestations one must not forget to try and find out what lies behind them. As in the case of other such Eastern religions—and in our own mediæval religious orgies, in which flagellants were a feature—the matter can be only understood if we take into account the historical and spiritual background to them. Just as in the Middle Ages it was the immeasurable horrors of the Plague that gave rise to such blood-deliriums, so here similar causes have been at work. For a thing so terrible as such a form of worship to take hold of men—nay of a whole race—they must have gone through times of suffering so profound that they have been driven into a state of despair for which they see the only vent in an outbreak of savagery. The history of the Persians tells us that they have experienced such a destiny, an uninterrupted series of tragic events having so wrought that the people, who in the old chronicles were depicted as living always in a state of sunlit happiness, have come under the burden of an intolerable gloom.

In the days of her ancient civilization Persia was justified in dreaming of a great future, but her blossoms were swiftly blighted when the warlike nomadic Arabs swarmed over the land, spreading the creed of Islam with fire and sword. The Persian, a man of high intelligence and refined culture, can find no spiritual comfort in Islamism, this specifically Arabic creed directed towards practice. Indo-Germanic blood flows in the veins of the Persian and therefore he has metaphysical yearnings which must remain unsatisfied by all the piety and severity inherent in the laws of Islamism. And all these yearnings of his, for which no fulfilment had been offered, now crystallized themselves round the figure of Hussein, his fellow-victim of Destiny.

The melancholy of unfulfilled yearnings is the stamp of the Schiite Persian, and its climax is reached in the attempts at self-destruction made on the day of Kerbela; a whirl of conflicting impulses work together towards this sanguinary

deed : besides standing for the commemoration of the fellow-victim of Destiny, the *Muharhem* symbolizes also the restoration of the conquered who, shaking his chains despairingly, lacerates himself, for he knows he cannot break his iron fetters. However strange it may sound, the *Muharhem*, this climax of the Islamic religious year, is at the same time the wildest protest against Islam, the religion imposed upon the Persians and inherently alien to them. In this wild blood-lust directed against themselves they give crude expression to their grief over the greatness they have lost for ever.

Finally, there is present in the hearts of the Persians at the same time (though it be unconsciously, like all these other feelings) a dark sense of thankfulness, if they hold it of importance that the orgies of the *Muharhem* should still take place in all their horror every year. The highland of Iran from the earliest historic times had been calamitously cut in two by the natural dividing line of a barren zone which stretches from the gates of Teheran to Baluchistan and Afghanistan. Apart from the few mighty personages in history who for a short period amalgamated the entire East into a Napoleonic sort of Empire, this highland of Iran, by reason of this dividing zone, could never be united into one single political realm. Not until 1502 did a Persian national movement contrive to achieve unity for the whole country encompassed by the mountainous walls of Iran. And the religious movement of Schiitism went hand in hand with this political movement, so that both movements were able to combine against the Sunnites. The force of both these movements had managed to overcome a natural geographical obstacle which for centuries had controlled the course of history so that a reflorescence of Persian culture could now come about. And how could the Persian show more reverence for the force of his creed than by maintaining it in fervent gratitude and with the greatest personal sacrifices ?

THE SUMMIT OF THE PALANDOKEN

What unites the Persians in spite of all obstacles offered by nature is the general feeling of grief over their lost greatness. And in the loneliest villages of the wastes, as in the metropolis of Teheran, this emotion of melancholy and unsatisfied yearning finds vent in the wild despair of the tenth day of *Muharhem*, giving forth in lamentation over the destiny of a betrayed people the mournful cry to Heaven—*Schachssé-wachssé !*

The day of Kerbela was over, the tension of feeling was relaxed, and Tabriz had sunk back into everyday life—the everyday life of a commercial town. Not far from the Urmia lake, but not lying in the marshy region adjoining the lake, the town unites in a natural depression all the roads which lead through the corridor-like land of Aserbeidschan towards the further East ; thus as a main stopping-place for the caravan route from the Black Sea and as the terminus of the Persian Caucasian railway it soon came to surpass Teheran in its economic importance.

From the top of a monumental tower of gigantic proportions, I looked down upon the city now grown familiar to me into the depths, over the sea of houses which spreads out in harmonious monotony in wide semi-circles round the Government buildings, in conventional style, in the centre.

In the distance, extending over the barren plain, a wide belt of blossoming gardens encircles the town, all of them secluded rigorously from the eyes of the profane by high walls of clay. Then comes the girdle of flat-roofed Persian houses, seen from outside an arid complex of walls and sun-baked clay, but within, for the most part, a magically beautiful play of Oriental fantasy in the form of courts, lawns and pools. And from here to the centre of the city run the arteries of Tabriz, which flow towards the centre of the commercial life of the whole country : the Bazaar.

In its inextricable labyrinth of street and roofed-over

passages the Bazaar harbours treasures with the wealth and rarity of which all the wonders of the Thousand and One Nights could not compare. The strange "German machine" was soon to be known by everybody in the twilight of the arcaded passages. One called out "*Khabadar! Khabadar!*" the word of warning used to clear a way, and with difficulty one forced a passage between the dawdling, smiling, welcoming Bazaar vendors, the water-carriers who try in vain to keep down the thick dust by sprinkling water from their skin-puncheons, the fruit-baskets in which may be seen sixty kinds of wild grapes as large as cherries, brought to ripeness by the hot August sun in one or other of the gardens of Aserbeidschan. Here a Mullah, recognizable at a distance by his blossom-white turban, pulls his *Abba*, his black mantle, more tightly round his body so that the sacred garment shall not be contaminated by the touch of the unbelieving machine. Laughing and chattering, the crowd presses in on me. In the long, winding passages, where the shops are arranged according to guilds, I seek out the saddlers' quarter because I have ordered leather straps there. Through small windows the sun's rays fall like gleaming blades of steel in the close air, in the whirling dust. At last I stop before the shop where some days ago I saw the master-worker surrounded by his apprentices working away in view of all the passers-by. On this occasion he is lying down on the floor asleep, his face covered by a black cloth to protect it from the flies. I do not venture to disturb him, for I know that the shop is held to be closed until he awakes again.

So I decided to visit my friend, who like the other merchants had his office in rooms which had been contrived out of old caravanserais. Entering through a large gate I went into a broad courtyard in which clerks of the merchants, of the exporters and importers, of the transport firms, the proprietors of caravans, and of the banks were hurrying to and fro. I had to pick my way in and out between bales of carpets,

chests and sacks before I reached my countryman's office. If the sun was burning hot in the courtyard, the heat was twice as oppressive in these low rooms. With the leisurely and extremely agreeable forms of courtesy which the custom of the country prescribed, the merchant was conducting to the door some customers who in accordance with etiquette had taken off their slippers so that now all the perfumes of Arabia were rising from their woollen socks. A new customer was now invited to come in and, as I had long before learnt that such an office in Persia is a true school of diplomacy, I sat down on one side to look on quietly after I had exchanged a greeting with my friend.

The scene before me made an extremely peaceful impression. The merchant and his customer drank tea, smoked, exchanged elaborate compliments, and in the meantime much business was transacted. At first the easy-going exchange of talk seemed to me to consist of irresponsible social chatter, but presently I became aware of a growing eagerness under the surface; for patience without end, clever foresight, and cunning disguised under forms of courtesy are the necessary conditions if a merchant wishes not to be the loser in a transaction with a Persian. The young man who sat there leaning comfortably against the cushions, sipping his tea and chatting lazily, had often before been at my friend's when I had called. He was the son of a Persian family known to be unusually rich, and not long previously he had ordered a motor from the German merchant. After tiresomely long negotiations he had at last decided to sign the order which would secure him the motor at trade price and a ten per cent commission for the merchant. After that, he had returned every day to impose new conditions in regard to the ordered car after first indulging in long talks about unimportant matters; on one occasion he wanted to have a new hooter which would make itself heard all over Tabriz, on the next he stipulated that the extra wheel should be made of two

detachable parts; finally he went so far as to insist that the motor should run not only with petrol but also with paraffin. The merchant never gave a definite refusal and never attempted to oppose these senseless requests upon rational grounds; he knew only too well that that was not the way to achieve his purpose. Instead, in his diplomatic fashion, he so formulated the Persian's conditions that they should, indeed, be feasible, if not precisely in the manner in which the purchaser intended.

On this particular day the young Persian had brought with him the money for the first payment, and he counted it out on the table with much circumstance. But where, the merchant asked, was the commission provided for by the agreement? The Persian smiled as though absent-minded. "It will come along to-morrow," he said lightly. But it did not come along next day nor until several applications had been made for it. At last, after a somewhat more emphatic communication had been sent to him, an old Persian arrived in great state and asked: "What is this you write to me about a commission? I am the master and the father of the purchaser; according to Persian law, therefore, I have ordered the motor. I know nothing of any agreement regarding a commission." Further parleyings were of no avail. Their only result was that the Persian with dignified affability invited us to his house for the evening. The long-continued trial of the merchant's patience had got on my nerves; I remonstrated with my friend, but he merely laughed. "I want to bequeath to my grandchildren a good name," he said, "but not a lawsuit against a Persian!"

The evening passed in a way very different from my anticipations. We sat on cushions at the richly ornamented, overladen table beside the host, who was solicitously waited on by his sons and nephews and grandsons. Quite at the bottom of the table, at a perceptible distance from the others, sat the son who had ordered the motor. He ate little and

said nothing. Splendid fruit, ripened in the gardens of Aserbeidschan, stood in great heaps upon embossed dishes of brass. Twenty servants plied us incessantly with new dishes: crackling roasted meats, meats cooked at a slow fire, juicy baked meats, alternated with vegetables sometimes stuffed with aromatic spices, sometimes fried in fat or butter, then came sweets without end. The commission was not mentioned. Then came Mocha coffee, followed by tea, and finally sherbet, the pleasant iced fruit drink. Women are not present at such a meal.

The old man talked agreeably about Germany. He had never been there, he admitted, but he knew it must be the bravest country in the whole world. He liked the Germans particularly, for they were the friends of Islam. "What is this about a commission?"—"Well, we must come to that presently." And he clapped his hands and a conjuror came in and began to perform some daring tricks. While a long, curved sword was disappearing down the conjuror's throat, our host excused himself for venturing to offer us such meagre entertainment, when we might expect better in every cottage in our own country. The floor and the walls were covered with costly rugs. "We are poor; Germany is rich; her vanquished foes are sending her milliards in gold."—A sweet flavour of opium was wafted into the room. "You will take a spice in your tobacco?" We declined.

Hours had already passed when the old man remarked that of course he would endorse the order, but that his son had promised the commission on his own responsibility and his son had no money to pay it with. So he himself out of a strong feeling of friendship would pay a commission of a half per cent, as was the custom among honourable merchants. And having expressed his certainty that we should agree with him as to this, he sought to pass on to other topics. But the German merchant explained in icily quiet tones that we must proceed on businesslike lines alike with the delivery of the

motor and in the matter of payment. And so the talking and bargaining went on. One son after another, one nephew after another, one grandson after another, tried his hand at the art of persuasion. And at every fruitless effort to penetrate the armour of the merchant the old man raised his offer by a decimal. At last he brought his heavy artillery to bear. He motioned to the son who had given the order, and the unhappy young man approached the merchant with supplicating mien. "Have pity on me!" he said. "My father will throw me out on the street because I gave that order on my own account." But the merchant remained unmoved. Then they all wanted the amount to be reduced to a round sum. "Will you not take 200?" they asked. "It sounds better and is more easily counted than 258!" But the merchant only said: "Here is the assignment of your first payment for the motor. Until this reaches Berlin you get no motor. And it won't be sent off to Berlin until a quarter of my commission lies on the table." No one was prepared for this. The old Persian went somewhat pale. Then, however, he silently paid out the amount due and saw us courteously out of the house. As we left, a new day was breaking.

Throughout the whole of my journey from Trebizond to Teheran I kept coming upon traces of the unfortunate Schmude Expedition. In Tabriz I met some members of the expedition, a German married couple who had come out to Persia full of the highest expectations. A post as manager of a sugar factory had been promised to the husband, but on his arrival he soon saw that such promises were as hard to keep as they had been easy to make. After various vicissitudes he managed, being a many-sided man, to get a post as inspector on the Aserbeidschan railway. He and his wife invited me to make an excursion with them to the Urmia lake, and I joyfully accepted.

That day's ride in the freshness of the Persian summer

remains in my memory as an idyll of the most profound peace in the midst of months of troubles and excitements. Whereas formerly the travellers had countless stories to tell of the dangers of this " wild Kurdistan," whereas there used to be no end to the tidings of new revolutions of Syrians, Kurds, or Armenians in this stormy corner of Aserbeidschan, the Dictator Rhiza Khan has now established order here and one can take oneself off to Lake Urmia away from the cares of the world without any anxiety.

Lake Urmia is of a deep, still humour like a novel by Jean Paul, and discloses its real beauties only to him who knows how to appreciate them in the right mood of leisurely serenity. We vowed that we should put aside completely all the high-strung tension of civilization which disturbed our blood in order to get into this disposition. Such a vow proved to be necessary. At first, indeed, the little Persian railway took us over irrigated fields, steppes, wastes and pasture lands without end, which we could gaze out on comfortably from the cattle truck, placed at the disposal of the inspector as a saloon car, by the management of the railway. Suddenly, however, we came to a stop ; the wood-waggon, the " coal-tender " of the Persian railway, had caught fire : but there was not the slightest sign of excitement. The passengers got their provisions out of the train, squatted down on the ground and waited until the wood-waggon had been uncoupled and the smouldering logs taken off. Then we went on for a bit, but only to pull up once more soon ; a small child was seen sitting upon a sand heap, crying. Someone had forgotten it. In another few minutes there was a fresh alarm : the passenger carriage was now on fire. But we overcame all our troubles. " The smoke is coming from the engine ; and even if the passenger waggons are smouldering a little too—which Allah forbid !—we shall soon be at our journey's end ! "

Presently we caught sight of the lake. In the light of the evening sun stretched a great expanse of glistening water,

approached on the right by tiers of sloping ground—some of it pasture land, some marsh land. It was strange here in Persia to see green fields, not in the form of mere oases but outspread like a broad wreath. The train moved along slowly through gardens in which grapes as big as plums hung in heavy clusters, past fields in which the maize, already cut, stood in gigantic ricks and in which oxen drew the heavy, threatening sledges over the sheaves, and past orchards over which hung the scent of melons. Only the naked stone of the mountains reminded us that we were in Persia.

At Schirafaneh, the railway terminus, the rails run down to a pier, which goes out some distance into the lake, so that the agricultural population of Aserbeidschan can unload their produce comfortably from their wherries. As the Government keeps a sharp watch over the revolutionary region, we had to wait for the officials who were to examine our passes. A courteous Persian officer wearing on his breast the Iron Cross which he had earned as a volunteer in the Turkish army, quickly saw to us, speaking German, and now we sauntered comfortably through the place, a complex of two flat-roofed stone houses and a camp of tents, laid out like a chess board, inhabited by more than a hundred Armenian families. While this Armenian camp was almost devoid of foreign visitors the small houses were crammed full, for, as there is no hotel here, the Persians invited their friends on visits during the bathing season, they themselves withdrawing with Oriental hospitality to one tiny room, so as to be able to make their guests comfortable. Sunburnt men sat gossiping pleasantly before the doors, many Persian women gazed curiously at us unclean Unbelievers, while they blew forth disdainfully the smoke from their cigarettes. They were handsome, these Persian women with their dark eyes, which they adorn with broad, arched lines of dark paint.

The German married couple quickly found shelter in the

BOLSHEVIK TEMPLE IN ERIVAN FORMERLY AN ARMENIAN CHURCH

THE MAUSOLEUM IN ERZEROUM

Captain's house; I made a bed for myself on the verandah and went to sleep in the cool evening breeze.

We got up in the freshness of early morning so as to take a bath while the sun still lay behind the mountains of Tabriz and the waves beat against the shore in the bracing wind. From the high pier we dived into the water, then burst out laughing as we made fruitless efforts to swim in ordinary fashion; it was difficult to swim at all and impossible to sink, as the water had 30 per cent of salt in it and therefore held us up breast-high on its surface. We floated on our backs, too, propelling ourselves about with our hands, canoe-fashion, and we took sticks to which bath-towels were tied in our right hands and held them up upon our breasts, while we stretched out our left arms like the crossbeam of a Polynesian canoe, and so we sailed about pleasantly as our own yachts. The Persians watched us anxiously from the shore and made warning signs to us. "Don't go too far out into the lake!" they shouted. "The water in the middle will not bear you up—it will drag you down like a stone."

After our bath, we washed away the salt from our bodies, ate our *Yoghourt* and talked. Then the sun came out and in order to escape from the heavy atmosphere there was nothing for it but to return to the beach and bathe again.

Not until the evening did the longed-for coolness come back. We sat on the Captain's verandah round a bottle of Moselle. With us sat an emancipated lady of Persia—nay, *the* emancipated lady of Persia—a poetess whose name is held in high esteem far outside the literary circles of Teheran. She wore her black hair short and was unveiled, but her melancholy eyes seemed as though hidden behind a veil; only at rare intervals, and as it were by chance, did she raise her eyelashes. She spoke a Dostoievsky-like Russian, often helping herself out with simple English words. "For the most part" she said, "I am touched by the deep feeling of the Germans—

yet how naïve they are apt to be! A German lady came not long ago to Persia to bring freedom to our women! Would it ever have occurred to her to present the collected works of Schopenhauer to her cook? What Persian woman, however convinced of the greater happiness of her own life, would want to win over German women to her peaceful existence? You complain that the Oriental woman is as unfree as a slave and you don't see that she is free in herself, that she finds this higher freedom because she allows herself to be led through the labyrinth of her own breast by the Ariadne-thread of her faith. You see externals, not what lies beneath. We not only think differently from you, we speak a different tongue from yours. Your courage is not our courage, your love is not our love, and even your freedom is not our freedom. And so we ask you Germans, as the most spiritual race, to try and understand our souls before you try to give us ideals, because otherwise the gift will not be one of grace but rather an infliction. I look for understanding to the Germans first of all, because of what my Russian friends tell me of Spengler and his book. . . . After all, is it so difficult to enter into the feelings of others and to see their own worth?" Then, with a fleeting smile and a little wave of her slender hand, she refused another glass of our Moselle. "Have you had no suspicion," she asked, in a lighter tone, "that your beloved Moselle tastes to me just like vinegar?"

We sat on talking until late. Then one of us found a lute in the room and she sang a German song full of romance, which sent our thoughts back to scenes of home. We did not try to hide our sentimental feelings. "I do not understand your music," said our visitor, "but it touches my heart like sweet, plaintive sounds from strange, far-away, closed-up gardens. . . . If the races could talk to each other in music only, there would surely be no more wars!"

Near me sat the fair-haired German woman. Her hands lay still in her lap and her eyes looked dreamily out over the moonlit surface of the lake. "Do you know," she said, "what my greatest happiness is? It is being able to feel German!"

# CHAPTER VII

## HILLS AND HIGHLANDS : FROM TABRIZ TO TEHERAN

IN Tabriz a telegram awaited me which vetoed all idea of ending my expedition at the Afghan frontier. I was informed that it was not convenient to absolve me from my undertakings on the grounds stated by me. So now, rather disturbed by this, I had to get ready for my journey into Afghanistan. Beschkov, who was anxious to see Teheran also, had taken most of my baggage on ahead. I was worried about money and began to occupy myself again with business matters. I wrote some articles, too, and set to work to get my motor-cycle into order.

My first trial trip upon the next stage of my ride was most disheartening. The Russians had, indeed, begun to lay down a new road for the forty miles or so beyond Mianeh, but, surprised by the Revolution, they had been obliged to abandon it, so they handed it over to the Persians, who in their turn handed it over to God. Its condition was now so shocking that I very soon had to return with my tail between my legs to Tabriz. I was counselled by my friends to leave my machine behind—they would sell it for me as soon as they had a good offer. Already they were willing to buy it from me themselves at a price which would much more than cover the cost of a motor drive to Teheran. But I was obliged to decline the offer, for without my machine I could not possibly fulfil my undertakings and carry out the scientific work in Afghanistan which I had planned.

When the time came to say goodbye to my friends I found

myself the object of general sympathy and commiseration, and I was full of self-pity, for I felt that not very pleasant experiences were awaiting me.

Immediately beyond the town my troubles began, the motor-cycle ploughing through deep sand like a ship's bow. I had not gone far when I had my first fall. A peasant helped to right me and my machine. As I started again he said to me : " If you have another tumble, come along to Jusufabad. There I shall help you again."

Suddenly the road took a turn to the left and the sand became deeper still, until at last I got absolutely stuck. After a preliminary survey, I was able to sum up the position thus : Here, on this side of Saidabad, the new road took a long detour to avoid the sharp ascent of the old natural road, which was apparently very difficult, though at least free from sand. I understood that I was now at the spot where formerly the traveller on his way to Teheran very often got stuck, and where he would proceed over the pass only with the aid of a second team of horses. For me there was no choice. I had to take the direct route over the mountains. As the machine would not budge I had first to remove my box, the bags and the reserve tank and carry them back to the cross-roads, before I could run the machine back. Then I packed the things into their old places again, measured in my mind the height of the hill before me with misgivings, and then off I went full throttle, second speed, full speed, first speed, off again, on again, off again, on again—I must have presented a grotesque sight to anyone looking on, but I was in bitter earnest. All my strength, all my training was here needed in order to master this short but incredibly stiff ascent.

Now there stretched out before me an undulating region of hilly country traversed by the tributary streams of the Kara Tschemen Tschai. The river itself could be descried here and there in the distance, running in the midst of a wide green strip of pasture land. Above this rose precipitously

a range of mountains from which descended numbers of stone-filled river-beds. Where they reached the valley there were often small villages, but their mosques and clay houses were of so grey a hue that one could scarcely make them out with the naked eye. Upon the hill slopes nearest me a few goats and sheep were finding what nourishment they could on the scanty meadows. It seemed scarcely credible that there should be any grass at all upon these hills of sun-scorched stone. One could see no vegetation of any kind, except some scattered clumps of the straw-coloured camel-weed. In many directions I could see the black tents of the camel drivers, with their queer-looking guns propped up against them. Beneath a pan in which one party of them were making their flat cakes, burnt a fire of camel-dung; hard by, their camels were nibbling at cactus leaves.

As I proceeded, I had often to make my way over the dry bed of a river. Getting out of the loose sand among the stones and from out of the stones on to the sand again, I had so many bad falls that I decided to push the machine, taking care not to let the motor stop work, for once in the middle of a river-bed I could not set it going again. When it did stop work in such circumstances, I had first to unstrap my luggage and carry it across, then drag the machine along to the bank. Then I had to set the motor going again and try to keep on as before.

I was anxious at all costs to avoid the sandy new road, so I resolved to persevere on this old road which went along uphill and down dale through passes and ravines. Soon, however, I grew disquieted. Similar roads branched out continually on both sides. Was I going right? At last, towards evening, I met a mule caravan. "Is this the way to Mianeh?"—"You must go back a bit to where the road makes the big turning and then go along the new road. Inshallah!"—As Allah willed! I sighed and turned round resignedly. A cool evening wind sprang up over the rocks,

and I moved along over a moonlit road, delighting in the nocturnal peace and confident now of reaching Mianeh before midnight. But these too sanguine hopes were to be buried in the sand of the new road. I kept falling continually. At one point where I was taking a curve at a good speed, I suddenly saw immediately in front of me a wire stretched right across the road at a height of between five and six feet. It was too late to stop the machine by using the brake, so I threw myself hard upon the ground. The wire had been put up by the Russian Telegraph people. This misadventure was a warning of the danger of riding at night without due care. In addition to this I was feeling worn out, so I came to the conclusion I must take a rest out in the open.

The barking of dogs and the flickering light of a fire from the other side of the road tempted me on. Two small boys were sitting alone by a fire which a shepherd had lit, but on my approach they ran off frightened and I had difficulty in calling them back. " What are you doing here in the night ? " " We are guarding the fields."

" Let me rest here beside you." And I won their confidence with biscuits and chocolate. They proceeded to call out to their friends in the darkness, and then we sat together by the fire for a long time. They made me tell them about my journey, about the sea and about the coolness of the forests. The Persian children listened intently with longing in their dark eyes. Later they began to sing. In soft plaintive tones they sang their strange unchild-like songs ; they sang of Karam, to love whom and to die silently for whom were happiness enough. They talked with a strange unchild-like wisdom and recited for me without stumblings, in high-pitched monotonous voices, long extracts from Hafiz and many things from other poets.

I was filled with wonder over these children, and I felt once again what had so often struck me before : that the Persians are of higher intelligence and more refined culture

than the other Eastern peoples. They are indeed better educated than the Europeans. That this should not be more often admitted is due to our petty and unfair way of picking out some queer and unintelligible characteristic of the Persians and taking the measure of the whole race thereby. If we really want to establish comparisons we must place the entire Persian character side by side with the European. To do this is to recognize that the Persian form of life is far superior to ours.

The Persian builds upon an immensely ancient culture, which he has known how to preserve through all vicissitudes, while the other races of the East lost their culture when they lost their external greatness. The Persians' refined sense of form made that preservation possible; and while with us the spiritual inheritances of past centuries are the possession only of some favoured circles, the old culture of Persia still survives, and in a condition so natural and unadulterated that even the simplest man of the people moves in the atmosphere of ancient days, knows about the deeds of the heroes of Persian history, and recites the words of classic authors as though they belonged to his everyday existence. . . .

We sat on before the fire in dreamy silence until at last I lay down beside my machine to sleep. Melodious sounds rang through my disturbed slumbers. Ghostlike the dark forms of the camels kept passing in the distance in the strangely luminous starlight. Their bells continued to tinkle in the stillness long after they themselves had vanished from sight. The fire was now dying down. Only the stars continued to shine out with indescribable brightness over the Eastern wastes.

Cool morning showers woke me from my sleep. Hardly had I shaken off my weariness and left a few yards behind me than I found my progress impeded by a broad river.

Now in the light of the dawn the country wore a wonder-

A VIEW IN ERZEROUM

TYPICAL PERSIAN HEAD

fully beautiful aspect. A grey violet radiance was spread out over a distant valley, and a soft blue lay on the barren mountain-sides changing up higher into a light green, while the peak was enveloped in that golden yellow which the now awakening sun would by midday be pouring down pitilessly upon its slopes.

How full of life and change the whole countryside looked in the gradually modifying play of lights! Sunlight is the Magician of the East, colour is its Romance, and these two together squander their riches most lavishly upon the poorest landscapes.

I had not much time at my disposal for such reflections, for I had now to get quickly across the river so that I might make good progress on my road before the heat of the day began. Soon I found a good fording-place and I got my baggage over safely. After I had covered up safely the magneto, the heart of the machine, in oil-drenched cloths, I took a long run and drove the machine throbbing away at full speed into the shallow stream. The waters splashed up on us, hissing on the hot cylinder and making a cloud of white steam all over us. The stones on the river-bed forced the handle-bars out of my grasp, but we got across—the machine snorting away protestingly and I wet through to the bone.

Now began on a road deep in sand the old story of balancing, tumbling, and re-starting. . . .

At last in the distance I espied Mianeh, a collection of grey walls of clay, framed by the green leaves of a row of single trees and crowned by the cupola of a mosque of which the bluish-green glazed surface glistened in the sunlight as though it were glass. As I approached the town the ground became gradually firmer, and presently the machine went splashing through the irrigation ducts of the fields, refreshing my tired body thereby.

The customs officers held me up at the gate. Soon, in the

way to which I had grown accustomed, a group of people collected round me, fingering the strange machine with astonishment. " A German," they said to each other, and the white-turbaned priest, bowing his head, added in tones of dignity, " A friend of Islam."

Through crooked alleys I proceeded to the station of the Eastern Telegraph Company, where I was to find a supply of petrol which I had ordered. This telegraph office is a little marvel of ultra-modern technical equipment in the midst of the Persian wilderness. Its four wires run on iron poles from east to west over the entire highland of Iran, connecting it with Berlin and London.

From his position between his Siemens apparatuses the Caucasian telegraph operator gave me a cordial welcome. After I had returned to my cycle and filled its tank and reserve cans with benzine I quitted Mianeh.

On the further side of the Karangu-su, over which a powerful stone bridge with more than twenty arches is built, I had before me a chain of mountains. Here also the Russians had begun to make a road round the mountains, but had been forced to abandon it.

After a ride of some hours I stood upon the heights and could drink in the beauty of the distant view. In the depths below arched the bridge over the silvery surface of the wide river, beyond reached out an endless succession of mountains of naked stone. Some lay in the shade, others reflected the brilliant sunlight. The slopes of those nearest to hand were seamed with water-courses, as though cracked by giants at play. The ranges beyond were shaded a soft blue, while the sharp peaks of the mountains furthest off were sunk in the deepest violet. The impressiveness of the sight of these mountains in their monumental simplicity and severity moved me much. Over them Cyrus and the Sassanids and Timur had made their way. Was it not the wildest temerity, for me and my little machine, to attempt to follow in their

lordly footsteps? In the midst of my musings I heard a throbbing to the west, an aeroplane was to be seen afar off flying towards the east, towards Teheran. Like a great bird in a fairy-tale it sped along only a few hundred yards above the mountain summits, victorious and splendid as a phœnix. In its scorn for all the perils of the Persian heights and deserts, this aeroplane seemed to me a symbol of the triumph of our science over the forces of nature and it drove all fear and doubt out of my heart.

As the road down from the top of the pass was so steep that I could not steer my machine, I began to descend with the motor off and with the break full on. If the chain were now to break again, there would be no holding back! The steepness was such that in order to maintain equilibrium, I had to put up my feet on the handle-bar. Over stone steps, passing within a hairbreadth of projecting rocks, we buzzed down to the valley, frightening out of their lives two Persians who were talking together quietly as they trudged up hill.

On we glided to the banks of the Kysyl Usen. I did not pull up until we had crossed the Pul-e-Dokhtar, the Virgin's Bridge.

In a tea khan, which resounded with shouts and laughter of soldiers, I now took a rest. Several of my cycle spokes were broken and I should have to replace them. I had to consider how I should be able to manage the rest of my journey to Teheran. It seemed certain that I should never get there in this fashion. If I sold the machine the proceeds would cover the expense of a drive to Teheran on the mail car. And if my expedition were thus brought to a sudden end, if I had to return home from Teheran, without even ever seeing Afghanistan, if I had to give up my contract with the newspapers and fail in my undertakings to the Wanderer Company—well, who would not commiserate with a man who only wanted to save his life? For to go on

with the cycle in its present state was merely to defy the Fates.

The soldiers in the tea khan got talking with me and with true Persian courtesy sang the praises of my machine. When I said out straight to them I would like to sell it they advised me to try and find a purchaser in the next town, Sendjan. "You see," they said, "we soldiers are poor and our horses are good enough for us."

Refreshed and in good heart, I set out again. The way upwards from the river was steep and the atmosphere was oppressive. The sweat poured down from my forehead. Now occurred to me for the first time in my life the use of my eyebrows: were they not there to catch the streams of perspiration and to turn them on one side I should never have been able to see my way!

Gradually the ground became firmer under me until at last the sandy way became merged in the old natural road, sometimes fifty yards in width, sometimes a hundred, which extended up to the higher levels.

Hunger forced me to make a halt in the village of Aghamasar, but I could only take a few bites of the meal which was offered me, cooked in rancid fat. So on I went again until I reached a spot where my front wheel got stuck in the mud of an irrigation duct, and I tumbled, drenching myself. The heat of the sun was so tremendous that in a few minutes all the damp was out of my clothing. Soon Sendjan came in sight. I was feeling exhausted, and some friendly soldiers pushed my cycle for me up to the terrace of a tea khan into which I followed them. As it was swarming with vermin, I left it, however, and lay down beside my machine in the open and fell asleep at once.

Next morning I continued on my way to Sendjan. After I had crossed a broad river I overtook a man on horseback who gave me a friendly greeting with a blessing and complimented me on the pace of my machine, while adding with childlike

boastfulness: "But mine, of course, is swifter than yours." We proceeded to challenge each other playfully to a race, which I made exciting for him by so changing my speed as just to keep up with him. Thus we went along for quite a long time, each in turn catching up and passing the other, until at last he had to beg for mercy for his overheated mount. "Your horse snorts worse then mine," he said, "but it doesn't lose its breath like mine!" We agreed to call the result of the event "indecisive," dismounted, and threw ourselves panting on the sand. There, smoking and laughing, we compared notes as to our methods of transit. Our race had made us good friends . . . little did I then foresee that a piece of fun no less innocent was to bring my journey to a fateful ending!

By the time I had reached Sendjan I had no longer any thought of selling my cycle. With firm ground beneath me, I won new courage and began again to feel that I should be able to cope with all the coming stretches of my ride.

The road now grew better and better, but my tyres had become porous owing to the terrible heat, and I had to stop repeatedly to attend to them. At last I had to take the machine into the courtyard of a khan and remove the tyres altogether in order to repair them thoroughly.

In the course of the evening two Persians got into friendly conversation. Naturally they were anxious above all to hear something about the life of German soldiers. They were keenly interested in what I told them about the military discipline of the "Almans," and when they shook their heads incredulously over some of the details I proceeded to give them some practical illustrations. This amused them hugely, and right on into the night they gave me no peace. They wanted to go on drilling and saluting for ever, trying even with much laughter to reproduce in the right tones, with the R properly pronounced, the words of command—*Strramm gestanden! Prräsentiert das Gewehrr!*

Some time after I had at last lain down for the night beside my machine they appeared upon the scene again, whispering now, and with an air of importance.

These great children wanted to show me their gratitude by a " pleasant surprise " of a very remarkable kind. Still half asleep, although they had given me a series of well-meaning thumps to wake me, I did not at first understand the situation. As a reward for my kindness they had brought me triumphantly a *Matuschka !* There she was smiling at me with unquestionable good will ! Laughing, I refused ; at which the soldiers were visibly much offended. They had wanted to give me a very special token of their feelings, for, generally speaking, it is not permissible for an unbeliever to touch an Eastern woman.

My fatigue was gone when I awoke again. From the terrace of the khan I looked out into the dark night. I was anxious about my next day's ride, for I had used up almost all my glue for tyre-repairing purposes, and what little of it was left was so stale and dried up that it would scarcely dissolve even in petrol. My only hope was that a motor-car would pass from whose chauffeur I could get some glue. My two Persian friends waited with me, patiently and devotedly. Gradually their merry talk died down. In weary silence we sat together, gazing out into the distant darkness.

What looked like a ray of sheet lightning flashed out on the horizon, vanished, flashed again and yet again and then went hopping about over the undulations of the hills. There was no doubt about it—it must be a motor-car on its way to Teheran. With gathering excitement and relief I watched the flickering light, but minute after minute passed without its becoming perceptibly brighter or nearer. The Persians waited more confidently and more patiently than I. From childhood up they had been familiar with this strange phenomenon of the desert, that the rarefied atmosphere brings clearly to your eyes a light shining at an immense

distance away and deceives you by making it look so near. At last, however, the sidelights of a car could be clearly identified, then the car itself appeared ghostlike out of the darkness, and rushing forward we signalled to it to stop. The occupants enquired courteously in French as to our needs. They explained that they were Armenian architects, and that they had been sent by the Government to the neighbouring ore-mining camp to ascertain whether they could have a building constructed out of the silver ore which the mine was producing in great quantity. One of them showed me a piece of the ore containing a lot of silver, and explained that the mine was not on a paying basis because the region offered no facilities for refining and the expenses of transport were prohibitive, and that the Government, so as not to let the treasure remain quite idle and at the same time to give a striking proof of the wealth of the land, had decided to have a beautiful edifice erected in the centre of Teheran made out of this ore. A palace of glistening silver !—why should not Persia give reality to this fairyland dream ?

The Armenians had imitation-rubber tyres and therefore carried no glue with them. No other motor-cars came along during the night, so I started out on my ride next morning with misgivings. I thought I would try at any rate to get as far as Sultanieh. But I did not manage to do even this, for I had a new puncture every hundred yards. Apart from all the labour of mending, I had only an ordinary bicycle pump to blow up the tyre with, as I had lost my regular pump in one of my tumbles. All the endless pumping taxed my muscles very much, and the sun cut like knives into my flesh.

The day dragged on painfully with its alternations of riding, repairing, and tumbling off, and when evening fell at last I had not covered eight miles. I decided, therefore, although I had been feeling worn out all the afternoon, to continue on after dusk, as in the cool of the evening the patches on the tyres held much better and in the light of the full

moon the road lay clear before me. The road was much better here, especially as a firmer pathway had been trodden out upon the sand. The iron poles of the Eastern Telegraph Company showed me the direction.

The road continued over smooth valleys between the mountains : to the right every now and again I saw the stars reflected in the river. Caravans and camels, laden with wares, swung along past me, avoiding the heat of the sun; they travel only at night. Then came columns of waggons, each drawn by four horses. This form of transport is so typical of Persia that it has been called the Persian automobile. A troop of spare horses accompanies the procession of waggons always, for the driver knows that he must reckon on the loss of several animals in the course of his fatiguing journey. All along the road may be seen the skeletons of horses whitened by the sun.

I decided to have a rest in a large caravanserai. Racked by hunger and thirst, I asked the host for an evening meal; here it happened to me for the first and only time in Persia that I was badly treated. With an undisguised look of hate the man, a religious fanatic, glanced at the unclean *Kafiren*, pushed in front of me some spoilt odds and ends of food, and went off in gloomy silence. The friendly treatment I had become accustomed to from the natives of the country had not prepared me for this, and I was all the more hurt, and feeling hungry still and almost stupefied I made my way down to the waterside, where I spread out my rug near my machine, for the host had made no answer to my request for more food and for a place to sleep in in the courtyard.

The following morning I took off the tyres in order to change them about. As the tyre of the back wheel was now mostly patches, I wanted to put it on the front wheel so that the repairing of its next puncture might be less troublesome. In the caravanserai now there was much commotion. A lorry-full of soldiers had just driven into the court.

THE KHYBER PASS

THE ROAD TO CABUL

A shout of "*Strramm das Gewehrr!*" took me by surprise. How pleasantly the familiar German words sounded, given out though they were frivolously and shockingly pronounced! Their faces beaming with delight, both my Persian friends of the evening before last now stood in front of me and, proud of their new knowledge, presented arms. Naturally I commended the way they did it and they sat down by me, gossiping merrily. They told me that all the soldiers in the lorry were off to Hussein's grave at Kerbela. A modern form of pilgrimage! While they were telling me this, they broke off in their narrative, one of them saying: "Aga, you are not happy, as you were before; has some trouble happened to you under the Persian Sun?—beneath which may your shadow never grow less!" And I had scarcely begun the story of my hunger and my rebuff when they rushed off. One of them hurried back at once and set eggs and bread and a great bowl of milk down before me, and darted off again. I took a few bites only of the bread and, in the fear that there might be trouble brewing, followed them into the caravanserai, whence a wild shout now resounded. They had knocked down the host, and with kicks and blows from the butt-end of their guns they were paying him out for his bad treatment of their friend. Only with some trouble did I succeed in getting them to stop, and then they showed every sign of being pleased with themselves. Once again they had given me proof of their gratitude.

They soon saw to it that everyone on the spot knew my history, and the lorry driver, who had a vulcanizing apparatus, came to me and helped me to repair both tyres with it. Indeed, when both the lorry and I were starting off again, he gave me half his supply of glue into the bargain. With a loud "Urrah!" the whole lorry-full of soldiers bade the "Alman" farewell.

I continued my ride along the old Royal road. In front of me I saw two armed men, save for whom there was no

sign of life. The clatter of my motor attracted their attention and they whispered to each other, waiting for me to pass. Their gestures and bearing boded me no good, but, as in all such circumstances, I went forward to meet the danger. I stopped and spoke to them. I looked them straight in the face, gave them cigarettes and explained the mysteries of the machine to them. Nothing that I could do, however, affected the threatening character of their demeanour. Then I persuaded one of them to travel a bit of the way with me. Curiosity tempted him ; he clambered up behind me, and as the road was good I was able to carry him along at a fine rate ; his companion, who followed gesticulating excitedly, dwindled to a mere speck in the distance. Soon, however, my companion was clamouring to be put down. I stopped and, still trembling with fright, he was all gratitude to me for setting him free. I did not wait for his friend to come up, but got on my machine again and rode off full pelt. This was the only adventure of the kind I had in Persia, where a man is safer to-day than in our big cities in night time.

In Sultanieh I got possession of the petrol which I had sent thither by post. The melancholy of departed glory hangs over this town with its poor grey clay huts, among which strange and splendid examples of ancient architecture, towering aloft, seem to bemoan their own fate.

I tried to make an early start, but just beyond the town tyre troubles again overtook me repeatedly. At last I had scarcely strength left to use my pump any more. A peasant in a blue caftan was passing just then with his ass, and looked at me silently, evidently noticing my fatigue. Allowing his animal to nibble at the thistle-like camel-weed growing by the side of the road, he took the pump out of my hand and used it calmly and as a matter of course, until the tyre was properly blown out. Then quietly and still without a word he and his ass proceeded on their way.

I had reached the main road which connects Hamadan

with Kaswin and was now making due north towards the latter place. I had got past the line which divides the Persian-speaking region from the Turkish-speaking. Down to then I had made myself understood quite well, because the inhabitants of Aserbeidschan speak Turkish, but of Persian I knew only the most necessary words. The scenery also was now quite different. Behind me sank the mountain-ranges of Aserbeidschan. Before me stretched out an endless expanse which faded away on the eastern horizon in the tremulous air in a shade of bluish violet, while to the north it was closed in by the Elburs mountain-range! From these mountains silvery streams came winding down into the great basin-like valley, where they disappeared in the sand. In narrow borders alongside the course of these streams extended long successions of fields and gardens, widening into a broad ring round the peasants' houses. All around gleamed the yellowish white of the sand. The green stripes looked like long drawn-out oases in the bare and desolate wilderness.

The northward road went in a perfectly straight line. Even the good glue which I had been given by the lorry driver did not hold in the tremendous heat, and about seven or eight miles before I got to Kaswin the tyre punctured again so badly that there was no repairing it, so I had to push the machine along, wearied as I was by my exertions and the sun's scorching rays. At last I reached a tea khan where with tea and Yoghurt I quenched my thirst. Yousouf Aga, the friendly host, took charge of the cycle with many expressions of sympathy and comforting aphorisms, while I took up my position on the road on the look-out for a motor-car that might give me a lift on to Kaswin, whither, by the way, I had ordered a rubber tube to be sent for me in addition to various extra parts. I had not to wait many minutes. Bumping comically along over the uneven road came a Ford carrying inside it a Persian family of six persons sitting on each other's laps and with their luggage overflowing on to its very steps.

The chauffeur of this public conveyance declared himself willing to give me a lift, and with a magnanimous wave of the hand invited me to take a seat wherever I liked. I perched myself upon a mudguard, and my modesty in so doing caused the father of the family to take a deep breath of relief, for he had manifestly been afraid that I might want to plump down beside one or other of the ladies!

That same evening I returned to Yousouf Aga's tea khan and put the new tyre on the wheel. The prospect of coming to civilized localities again impelled me next morning to make an elaborate toilet. Yousouf, who spoke Turkish, watched all my movements intently. He was determined to help me also with my washing, but squatted down on the ground with the basin as Orientals are accustomed to sit while they wash. I, on the other hand, wanted to wash standing up. — Drawing my attention to the basin, he said: "Sit down, Alman!"—"It is you who must get up, dear Aga!"—"But I thought you wanted to wash?"—"That is why you must get up, Aga! We Germans always wash standing." With loud exclamations of astonishment, he got up and gazed at the extraordinary performance which his foreign visitor proceeded to go through. When it came to my taking off my shirt he at first looked away abashed, for to uncover the upper portion of one's body is in the eyes of an Oriental shocking in the extreme. But his curiosity overcame his modesty and, gathering confidence, he cast scrutinizing glances at me, almost dropping the jug in his astonishment when he saw the state of my skin, for my arms and chest showed many bruises caused by my falls. "*Mashallah!*" he cried. "The Germans slough off their skins like snakes!" And he called out to his servants to come and see the astounding spectacle.

The sun had not yet risen when, riding again now on my machine on the *chaussée*, constructed by the Russians, which leads from Enseli, the harbour on the Caspian Sea by

Kaswin to Teheran, I was able to proceed already at noon along this most frequented of all the highways of Persia. The road, which extends right to the foot of the Elburs mountain-range, was laid out on a broad scale in accordance with Russian engineering principles, but already to-day it is greatly worn out.

While getting over a boulder-strewn river-bed I had a bad fall and struck my front wheel so violently against a rock that its axle was smashed. The knowledge that this time I could not myself make good the damage, and that I must abandon my ride so near my goal, depressed me mentally and physically. In a state of absolute apathy I sat down on the roadside among the ruins of the " Wanderer," saying to myself that I didn't care now *what* happened !

I had not so sat for long when a motor-car pulled up in front of me and a Russian chauffeur enquired sympathetically regarding my misadventure. He advised me to leave the machine in the nearest tea khan and to drive back with him to Kaswin, where I should certainly be able to get a new axle. As it turned out, this was not to be done at Kaswin, and the Russian was almost more disappointed than I, for he felt penitent over making me go back. Finally, he drove me to the " Auto-Iran," the Russian automobile depot, and here I was successful. I had to wait on two days in Kaswin, however, they told me ; then a lorry would arrive, which was taking a load of silver money to the Russian Embassy : the Russians would pick me up on the way and also fetch the machine. Thus it was that my cycle and I, both of us the worse for wear and heartily tired of the Persian highlands and stony wildernesses, made our way into Teheran between heavy chests full of silver.

That evening I did not see much of the capital. I crept into a Buick car in the Russian garage, and the consciousness that now at last I had reached my destination enabled me to fall into a profound sleep.

Teheran lies at the foot of the Elburs mountain-range which slopes down gradually on its southern side; Oriental settlers have a preference for gentle and gradual hill-slopes so that natural water-courses may not flow too violently into the canals and irrigating ducts which they construct in their towns. It was only 150 years ago that Teheran was raised to the position of capital; its situation is by no means so central as that of Ispahan, and this indicates significantly how strongly the whole development of Persia's political and economic life has been towards the north during the last two centuries. Teheran is a comparatively young city, and therefore contains none of those precious evidences of culture in which Tabriz, Ispahan, and above all the southern cities of Persia are so rich.

The oldest of its buildings are the Palaces of State of Katschdyn which stand out here and there round the lofty stronghold of the Arkh. At their feet extend the dark labyrinths of a Bazaar which is not to be compared in importance with that of Tabriz.

The maze of grey clay huts in the old town present a strange contrast to the modern quarters of Teheran, in which shady avenues, watered by canals, lead to elegant villas in European style and to broad flower-gardens with fountains playing in them. Although the heat is not so oppressive here as in the old town, the summer months are so unbearable that inhabitants who can afford it spend this period of the year in the neighbouring locality of Schirwan, which lies picturesquely in the shade on the slopes of the Elburs mountains.

When I went out into the open from the darkness of the garage, I had almost to shut my eyes, half-blinded by the brilliant sunlight which flooded the streets. Bronzed *hamals* sprinkled water from their carriers upon the dust which the motor-cars raised in dense clouds. Every now and again one heard the bell of the horse-drawn tram, the proudest acquisition of the town in the opinion of its natives.

At the German Embassy I got the address of my travelling companion, who had arrived some days before me. I found him down with malaria. The very friendly German Ambassador invited me out to Shirwan, and there to my delight I met a famous Eastern explorer who had just returned from Afghanistan. With keen interest I begged him to tell me about that country. But he had little that was pleasant to say about his travels there; he had been obliged on arrival to leave his scientific materials behind him at the frontier, and in Cabul he had discovered that he would never be able to carry through his explorations. So after a stay of only a few days he had returned to Persia. When I told him of my own Afghan plans he warned me strongly not to attempt them. "You may venture wherever you like in Persia in the most untrodden regions," he said, "you can go into the wastes of Kewir and of Luth, but don't you set foot on Afghan soil, where serious scientific work cannot possibly be carried out; for either you must move about under the care of the Government, in which case you must not leave the main road, and intolerable restrictions prevent you from doing your work thoroughly and exhaustively, or else you will venture against the wishes of the Government into the extremely interesting unknown regions—in which case you will never return!"

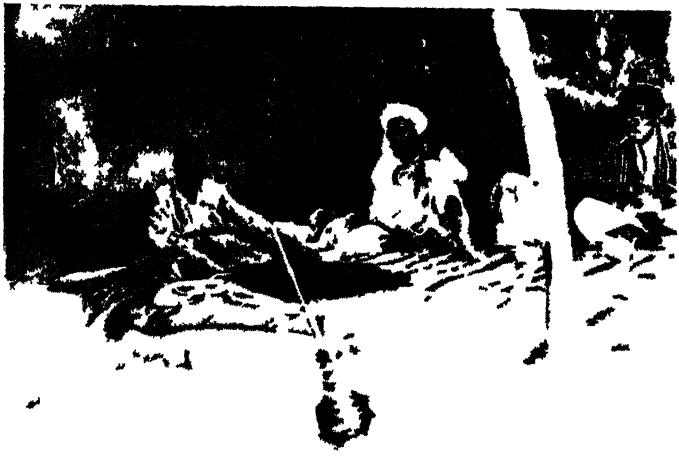
Unfortunately my eagerness was not chilled by this warning, but only stimulated! Up to this point I had often, by frank bearing, got into cordial relationship with Orientals even in the regions that bore the worst name, and so I believed I could win over the Afghans in the same way. However, I was sufficiently impressed by the things told me about Afghanistan by this experienced explorer to alter my plan regarding my route. Instead of going thither, as I had intended originally by Meshed and Herat, I now decided on the safer road over India to Cabul. For this, however, I needed a British visa for transit, and, despite the utmost

exertions of the German Ambassador, who put himself to great trouble in the matter, I had to wait for weeks before the English would give me one.

However, both my motor-cycle and my finances benefited very much from my enforced stay in Teheran, for I now at last found new opportunities for writing articles, attending to business matters for German firms, and repairing my bent, battered and broken machine.

Naturally the sight of the " Alman-Doctor " at work at the turning-lathe formed a great attraction for all the curious, and crowds of increasing size collected round me daily. Experts among them gave me good advice and, acquiring confidence, offered me their help. Despite their amiability I hesitated, however, not merely on grounds of expense, to entrust any of the more important details of the work to them. I restricted myself to letting the friendly Russian chauffeur lend a hand in regard to some minor matters. The fact is I knew only too well that my journey was often looked at askance by people of other nationalities as " propaganda " for German work ; and, ever since an Italian in Trebizond had purposely made a mess of a piece of mending work, I held firmly to the rule to attend to all important reparations myself except when I met German experts.

The time I spent in Teheran was marked by unusual political excitement. A terrible concatination of troubles,—an arid summer, a bad harvest, a bread shortness, and consequent famine—had evoked revolts in the Capital, in the course of which mobs, led by women, stormed the Parliament House and demolished the Chamber of Commerce. The Russians immediately brought motor-cars full of grain to the town and distributed it gratis among the needy inhabitants, whereby they certainly won many adherents. Next day a proclamation was made by the Persian Government that henceforth, now that the famine had been coped with, any further outbreak would be regarded as a political revolt and would be ruthlessly



A TEA KHAN ON THE ROAD TO CABUL

THE PASSAGE OUTSIDE MY PRISON CELL

put down. In spite of this threat fanatical citizens organized a new demonstration against the police and there was a wild battle in the Government Square, in which, however, the military got the upper hand. The last of the insurgents, some hundreds in number, took refuge in the extensive garden of the Russian Embassy which, as extra-territorial ground, was immune from the power of the military and the police. But after a few days these men also had to give themselves up, as the military surrounded their place of retreat and starved them out.

So much for what one actually saw; but everyone who knew anything at all about Oriental politics knew that what one saw was only the latest unhappy consequence of events which, unknown to the uninitiated, had been happening behind the scenes. Soon all kinds of conjectures began to crop up regarding the real causes of these disturbances. Most people believed that the Persian Government had deliberately provoked this Revolution, keeping the supply of grain outside the gates of Teheran so that the hunger-revolt should break out. They were thus given a pretext for putting the town under martial law, and at the same time for prosecuting those Persians who were inclined to Bolshevism and whose Radical tendencies had already begun to cause disquiet.

On the other hand, many people inclined to the view that the Russians had engineered the disturbances so as to win goodwill by coming to the rescue at the last moment with these grain supplies, and thus strengthen their position in Persia, which had been getting more and more out of their control. Finally, there was a theory that the Revolution was the work of the English who, by excellently contrived machinations, had forced the Russians to expose themselves by giving support to the insurrectionists.

Whatever may have been the truth as to the real causes of the trouble, they offer a typical illustration of the way in

which events, especially political events, have to be looked at in the East. Never must one assume that things are as they seem to be, one must always look for the hidden causes of which these things are only the effects. In Afghanistan, the High School of Eastern Politics, these conditions are to be met with in an extreme degree. We Germans in particular may observe there, in chapter and verse, how infinitely superior the Oriental is in political insight—how he never is satisfied with the mere facts of any occurrence, how he investigates them and turns them to account as consequences of another occurrence. The blame for the development of this trait in the Oriental may be traced to the tyranny of Might in the Near East; in earlier times in Persia—as happens still in Afghanistan to-day—a man could hardly acquire and keep a fortune without being hourly in fear lest a stronger man should rob him of it on some empty pretext. And as this fear penetrates into the life of politics and affects even the closest relationships between individuals, the Oriental still troubles much less about what a man says to him than what the man really is after when he says it. The European merchant learns soon enough to use his words cautiously and to keep the Oriental's distrust continually in mind, but the scholar, or the simple-minded traveller, finds it difficult to realize that in the East people look behind all his questions and statements to discover what there may be in the background that is meant to benefit him and to hurt them.

This trait in the Oriental may be a disturbing one, but if we would be fair to him we must bear in mind the fact that anything like idealism is entirely foreign to his mind. It is inconceivable to him, for instance, that a traveller should come to his country for the purposes of science and devote himself to them to the extreme limits of his capacity and energy without seeking any sort of material benefit. Such a thing would be impossible for himself, so he cannot believe

it of anybody else. And that what is strange to a man's mind should at first sight be received with mistrust is so general a weakness that we must not lay this charge against the Oriental alone.

The Persian with his strongly developed sense of form and his gifts of sympathy is quicker than anyone else to understand and appreciate the purely idealistic motives of others. And when he perceives them he is apt to manifest a degree of reverence for them that strikes us as almost ridiculous. His feeling for form causes him to surround the Great Man with marks of distinction and veneration which our blunted perceptions do not understand. In Persia, for instance, I have noticed that when natives see a distinguished or venerable man going up steps they will hasten up to him and offer him their help. This way of demonstrating respect covers a deep-lying sense of symbolism: the Persian, in his vivid way of imagining things, has so definite a conception of the responsibility which lies on the shoulders of a man of great position that he feels it necessary to help him to bear it.

The very uniformity of the Oriental type of human being explains the extraordinary esteem given in the East to the few individuals who do stand out conspicuously. Generally speaking, the East has always been extraordinarily poor in outstanding personalities. The present epoch, however, has suddenly produced great men everywhere, so that the East appears all at once to have taken on a new aspect. Personalities like Rhiza Khan, Abdul Kerim, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, Ibn Sand, and the present Amir of Afghanistan seem to have emerged with such astonishing simultaneity from the centuries-old sleep of the Orient that this swift transformation is found hard to explain. Perhaps the war has contributed substantially to the awakening of men's souls. The events are too recent and too novel for the Oriental to venture on an explanation. He accepts the situation with equanimity,

asking no questions and pronouncing no verdict, as a boon bestowed out of the inexhaustible wisdom of Allah.

It must be admitted that the national heroes have not all succeeded in equal measure in working up their peoples into a state of unanimous exaltation by force of their personalities. While in the Near East, where the people are already being filled with a strong national consciousness, the Turks congregate round Kemal Pasha with ardour and devotion, the Persians, in whom national feeling has yet to be awakened, visualise Rhiza Khan primarily as the old type of despot to whom they have to submit resignedly. Nevertheless Persia is democratic enough to forget the antecedents of the Dictator in just recognition of what he has achieved. The hall porter at the German Embassy, indeed, enjoys telling how once in old days the man who now occupies the throne of Darius and of Xerxes, used to carry letters for a small *baksheesh*, but if memories of this kind are still alive, they merely strengthen the conviction that this man, who has succeeded in raising himself from such a condition and bringing into a united whole a land which had been thought of as lost, must be of the true Napoleonic type.

The military gave substantial help to the work of the Dictator. It is noticeable that in contrast with what used to be the case in the past there are military posts to be found now all over Persia. With the help of his brilliantly led troops Rhiza Khan succeeded in putting down the risings of the Duodez Prince and in setting up a united and powerful state organization. This feat, which to even a Persian of vision would formerly have seemed unrealizable, must not be refused recognition.

On the other hand, we must also remember that Rhiza Khan's creation has been so fruitful only because the time was ripe for his appearance. Ten or twenty years earlier he could not have forced his way through. Persia's history had always been conditioned by a fundamental factor. In former

days it was impossible for the strongest personality, for the most resolute will, to unite and hold together a land whose frontiers lay so far apart that they could be reached only by a journey of months. The Persia of yore went down through possessing an expanse of territory too great for government.

Rhiza Khan's creation, however, has been so successful through the fact that the course of time held out a helping hand to him: it happened at just the right psychological moment that the motor-car became available to cope with the difficulty of Persia's size. Now that this has synchronized with the appearance of a great man, Persia has entered upon a new epoch, marked by the growth of a national consciousness. To the Persian of yesterday all kinds of national sentiment were unknown; he was marked only by the consciousness of his ancient culture, which had always left his mind free and which had caused him to despise the sentiment of nationality which he had chiefly learnt to know through Europeans, for he felt with unshakable conviction how infinitely superior the form of his culture was to that of the Europeans, and of European culture all he saw was the outside form. The European himself must, if he be fair, admit that he is inferior in his form of life to the inhabitants of a country where he is despised as an unbeliever yet treated with extraordinary courtesy.

Now, however, that the Persian has become familiar with European science, he must recognize that this other culture also has its value and, by comparing its latest achievements with his old culture, he must learn to distinguish dead forms from living values. In his desperate desire to maintain that the old culture, despite the consciousness that its time is past, is still of the highest value, the Persian lost himself in the Mystical towards which he has always been strongly inclined.

At that moment Rhiza Khan's work began. Without, perhaps, realizing what he was achieving for his country as

regards external unification, he gave to the life of the Persian, who was allowing the desperate consciouness of the untenability of his old religious and cultural ideals to force him down into a mystical twilight remote from life, a new sense: that of patriotism.

# CHAPTER VIII

## DESERTS AND MOUNTAINS: FROM TEHERAN TO CABUL

ON the 6th of October, just a year from the beginning of my journey, I left Teheran and parted from my friend Beschkov, who now returned to his own country.

In the middle of September a sudden change in the temperature had taken place. While my meteorological records in Teheran had continued to show at the end of August an average noon temperature of 93·2 Fahrenheit and a humidity of 15 per cent, a fresh north-west wind had set in suddenly a couple of weeks later, the first thunder-storm broke and the rainy season began. Almost cold nights were followed by days steadily becoming cooler, and if the sun did just once send down its scorching rays at midday, the afternoon heat was generally dispersed by a violent and weirdly sudden storm. Torrents of rain flooded the streets and the dried-up river-beds in the neighbouring countryside began to fill again. I saw that I must make haste to quit Persia before the rainy season should make the roads quite impossible for my machine.

I made a start for Kaswin, which I wanted to reach that evening. Although it was only a few weeks since I had been along the road, the surroundings looked quite different, the October light giving so rich and glowing an aspect to the scenery that it had taken on quite a new aspect. The bare rocks of the Elburs mountains were gleaming in every shade of colouring between the most vivid orange and the warmest

and darkest blue, while the highest peaks were already wrapped in the white of the newly-fallen snow. There were once almost impregnable fortresses up on those heights, and dark stories about them have come down to us in legends. One of them was known as the Castle of the Assassins, that Islamic sect which saw in murder the greatest benefaction to mankind ; it was behind that ridge yonder, in Massenderan, that Persia's banished kings found their last asylum. The atmosphere of the valley now no longer vibrated from the heat. One's eyes were no longer hurt by the light, and one could let one's gaze travel freely over the furthest distances and could descry even the smallest objects with the utmost distinctness.

At the foot of the Elburs mountains the steppe stretched out before me with its stones and its prickly cactus, extending almost to the horizon. A village with a customs barrier, a tea khan, and a grove with running water I left rapidly behind me as I sped onwards through the sunlit wilderness.

I may have been still about forty miles from Kaswin when the nature of the light changed suddenly : the brilliant orange became pale yellow, and where a rich, deep blue had been visible there now trembled a phosphorescent green, and these hues increased with strange swiftness to the utmost intensity, only to die out again in a few minutes. Now a cloudy, dark grey atmosphere began to gather on all sides, descending from the north-west, from above the summits of the Elburs range, growing gradually denser and heavier. Clouds piled up high and there were flashes of lightning ; then a far-stretching greyish veil sank down to the surface, hiding the ground. A cool breeze blew suddenly in my face. There was the sound of the first clap of thunder, which then went rolling from the mountains on the right and ebbed away in muffled reverberations.

And now I am in for it ! In front of me to the left a small whirlwind of dust is shaping itself and spinning up higher and

DR. VON HAAFEN COMES TO SEE ME

higher towards the skies ; to the right I see another and another and another ; up they start, any number of them, in every direction, frisking about like hares. Suddenly, with a kind of shriek a tornado sweeps down upon me and dashes my machine and me to the ground ! The storm is now in full blast. The wilderness has taken on the aspect of a rough sea. Huge waves of sand blow this way and that, rising high into the air, then dashing down again in avalanches of the finest sand and dust, while the wind tears and rages and the whole world is plunged in an atmosphere of grey.

With difficulty I pull up my cycle and, holding it aslant, trudge along with it in the storm. Flashes of lightning break through the greyish darkness more and more fiercely, followed by tremendous, *crescendo* thunderclaps. . . . What was that ? A sharp whistling sound above me ! Now it has become a scream ! Now it has risen into a shrill screech which makes my heart stand still ! A white wall takes shape, ghost-like, high up in the air in front of me and bears down upon me—there is a flash of lightning—the ground rumbles as though a cavalry brigade were charging over it. In a moment the hail-storm is down upon me—hailstones of all sizes from peas to plums !

I very soon had had enough of the storm and was determined now to get along to Kaswin at all costs. Bending before the blast, to an unceasing accompaniment of thunderclaps and lightning flashes, I forged along just as fast as ever I could. The motor threatened to choke. Steam came hissing from the cylinder. Now I came a cropper on the slippery ice of the road ! I proceeded, as a measure of precaution, to pour some oil into the hollow of my hand and to apply it to the cloths round the magnetos. And so, on and on through the gathering darkness.

Gradually things improved. The storm ebbed away, the rain ceased. The ground everywhere was covered with the

hailstones, which torrents of water were now sweeping away. On the road was a waggon; the horses, unharnessed, were trembling and reeking. At last the rain stopped. Now and again there came a gust of cold wind as a sort of straggler after the storm, and from further and further off in the east a faint echo of thunder. Shuddering with the cold, I swallow a mixture of hailstones and aspirin tabloids! The darkness now lies thick behind me. But to the west the sun is sinking and its last rays are gilding the cupolas of Kaswin.

Early next morning I left the hotel and went for a stroll once more through the crowded streets of Kaswin—wide streets, shaded by rows of old mulberry-trees. I stood and watched with amusement the desperately earnest activities of the Persian police. Here, where for thousands of years, one may almost say, the people have come and gone freely in the middle of the road, Persia is now bent on enforcing the most up-to-date regulations for traffic. So at every crossing your eye is caught by a policeman's fur cap from which the Sun of the King of Kings shines forth and the Persian Lion draws his sabre upon you.

The guardians of the law had no easy task. "Walk on the right! Walk on the right!" they kept calling out unceasingly. A donkey which was determined to go its own way had to be kicked and buffeted before it would listen to reason; and quite a lot of time had to be spent in expounding to a bewildered peasant, who stood blocking the way, the use and purposes of traffic control. It was in vain the police admonished people to keep on the shady pavement. The male pedestrian would do so perhaps for a few yards, but would then placidly follow his natural inclination until at the next crossing he was again obliged to adapt himself to the spirit of the age. As for the women, they went their own way, quite undisturbed. Although they paid not the slightest attention to the new rules, the police did not venture to interfere with them; even in

the performance of his civic duties no Persian would be guilty of so flagrant a transgression of good taste.

In the narrow Bazaar, with its endless rows of stalls, a Tartar offered me his rugs, speaking very fluently in French. I answered him in his own language. Great was his astonishment. "*Mashallah!*" he exclaimed. "Listen to him! He talks Turkish!" "Oh, master," he continued, "I am thy servant. Thou mayst despise my wares for ever, but thou willst drink tea with me and discourse to me about Germany!" My next encounter was with a youth who had done odd jobs for me during my previous stay in the town. He used to sit in front of the hotel and wait there, hour after hour, on the chance of being engaged by some foreign visitor to run some errand. He would lie to you and swindle you in every language in the world!

I wanted to wait until the sun should have dried the road, so it was late before I made ready for my departure. I got my machine into good order, filling the tank and reserve can to the brim with petrol, for my next destination, Hamadan, was 150 miles away and the road lay through a wilderness where no petrol would be procurable.

Beyond the Customs barrier, where I had to pay the usual tax, began a road which had been kept in reasonably good condition by an English company. But I did not continue a great way on it, for I did not want to pass Yousouf Aga's khan without paying him a visit. He was delighted to see me again so unexpectedly and I had to sit and drink tea with him and answer a thousand eager questions. He particularly wanted to know whether I had yet grown my new skin! When he heard that I was going to ride on to Afghanistan, he was shocked and horrified. "To Afghanistan!" he exclaimed. "By my eyes, that thou willst never do!" And he did everything in his power to dissuade me from so wild a project, describing the country and its inhabitants in the worst terms possible. But when at last I had to go, he called down a

thousand blessings on me. Dear, good Yousouf Aga! How often my thoughts went back to him during my nine months in Afghanistan!

It was very pleasant to feel the firm, smooth surface again beneath my wheels, and the cycle went humming along at a rate reminiscent of home. Presently, to the right, I saw once more the road leading to Tabriz. Thank Heaven, I had not to go that way any more.

Although no obstacle was encountered on the road, the inner tyre of my back wheel suddenly let out the air. The outer tyre also which I had put on was sagging badly. On examining carefully into the matter, I found that the repairing of the outer tyres which I had had done for me at Teheran had been done so badly that all the old wounds in them were gaping once more. Now, in punishment for not having myself carefully supervised the work, I had to begin all over again, and as this would take time, I could not think of continuing on my ride. I made a stay in the next village, therefore, so as to be able to attend peacefully to my task.

I found the village in a condition of wild excitement. The inhabitants were rushing about in every direction like ants that have been disturbed, and a troop of soldiers were tramping their way through the crowd with their bayonets fixed. The gallant warriors were emitting shouts loud enough to deafen one, more, as it seemed to me, to keep their courage up than for any other reason. The hunger-revolt in Teheran had apparently spread as far as this remote little spot and the situation there looked threatening enough. The people gathered together now in a wide road, the soldiers taking up their position at a certain distance. Violent harangues of the customary type began, the speakers becoming more and more excited and abusive, and a conflict opened fitfully with the throwing of a few stones at the military. The shedding of blood seemed unavoidable.

Then occurred a swift change. While the men in the

crowd who had been shouting insults held back a little, suddenly the women rushed forward with such wild yellings and frenzied gestures against the soldiers that the latter lowered their weapons and stared at this new mob in astonishment. The women, unable to pull up, came into collison, not too violently, with the front rank, but, not being fighters by nature, none of them knew what to do next. Some seconds of embarrassment ensued and the threatened tragedy took on a humorous aspect. The man in command of the soldiers availed himself of the turn which things had taken to resort to a device that in Persia never fails of its effect: peaceful persuasion. How well I know this Persian practice! It needs much artistry and much time, but it always attains its ends. With suppleness and with a rich play of fancy, the speaker constructs some far-fetched train of thoughts, adorns it effectively with boldly-drawn images, and indulges in the most artful reasoning—which will prove all the more cogent with his compatriots the more preposterous it may seem to us Europeans; he will then support his own remarks with classical citations, to which new meanings are given by new inflections of the voice, and when he has crowned his oration by putting forward Allah's inscrutable authority as the supreme argument and evidence in favour of everything, then, no matter how serious the conflict may have been, it is ended!

It was in this true Persian style that our soldier addressed his hearers. Very soon they had forgotten that they had been out to organize a revolt. While the speaker developed his thesis, they all squatted down as though they had come to listen to a teller of fairy-tales, and proceeded to accompany his words with exclamations of approval and disagreement alternately, until at last the moving peroration to his speech won from them enthusiastic applause. They now broke up into groups and began discussing among themselves the points and merits of the disquisition—until the sight of my motor-cycle distracted their attention. The women, however,

kept proudly apart. They evidently felt that they were the heroines of the day—saviours of their country. But in real truth their defiance of the men of war had been no act of extraordinary temerity, for they knew perfectly well in their hearts that a Persian soldier would never in any circumstances whatever raise a weapon against a member of their sex.

In accordance with my usual practice I spent the night out in the open air beside my cycle. My attentive host had spread rugs out on top of my new sleeping-sack (which I had bought in Teheran), yet I shivered a little and realized that the nights now were becoming appreciably colder.

While I was sitting on the terrace over my breakfast, which, as always in Persia, consisted of tea, milk, eggs and bread baked in the form of flat cakes, a Ford car passed by, laden with baggage even down to the mudguards. Strapped on to it behind was a coffin, and from this one could be sure that the car was going to Kerbela, for the Schiites not merely make pilgrimages while living to the grave of Hussein, but like also to be buried near him so as to have their share of the beneficent influence exercised by this sacred spot. Formerly such dead bodies had to be sent thither by special funeral caravans which took weeks on their journey, while now at least those Persians who are well enough off are able to have the bodies of their relatives conveyed thus by motor-cars to their last resting-place. Even now one meets the funeral caravans often enough on the way to the Mesopotamian lowlands, but travellers do not indulge in pious thoughts on the occasion of such encounters, for the long journey in the heat of the sun causes terrible odours to rise out of the thin wooden coffins.

By the course of the Kararut I followed the Ford car upon a road along a narrow gully, which was bordered by steep rocks. My way led up to the plains of Hamadan over a pass,

in coping with the heights of which my cycle might overtake the car. I had to slow down a good deal as the road became bad and full of traffic. Pilgrims were on their way back from Kerbela, singing and waving flags; mules trotted along with unerring step laden with their burdens, and four-horsed waggons, packed high with goods, swayed along northwards.

If the road was not nearly so bad as that from Tabriz to Teheran, I breathed more lightly when at last I found myself no longer tied to it as in the mountains, but well away from the dust and the sharp chalk-stones and free to travel over the steppe which stretched illimitably to the left, while to the right the last foot-hills of the mountains still flanked the road. Here and there in the lower undulations of the valley were small patches of green which were refreshing to my eyes after all the blinding white of the chalk and which told of the near vicinity of Hamadan.

Hamadan, the ancient capital of Medea, lies at the foot of the Elwend range. In its girdle of fertile gardens, rich in wells, it presented a fascinating sight. In the hotel I met a German from Sultanabad, who was connected with an American carpet factory in that town. He told me how an American business had been established also in Hamadan for the manufacturing of Persian carpets. When I expressed my regret that "big business" and mechanical science should thus trespass on the Persian's most personal and most characteristic industry, he consoled me smilingly with the remark: "You can safely allow Persia's commerce and domestic economy to develop in our way. What you love in Persia, what you feel to be essentially Persian, can be spoilt by no civilization: it is the land itself and its past. And both have become indestructible through the purity of their form."

Next morning I was too busy repairing my machine to have much time for sight-seeing in Hamadan. But I felt impelled to make my way to the spot in the western part of the town where a small hillock crowned by a simple cube

made of bricks rises above the grave of Avicenna.[1] Even the tiresome importunity of the Dervishes could not deter me from spending a few minutes in thought in the dimly-lit interior, for Ibn Sina—that is the real name of the philosopher whose earthly remains here rest—seemed to me the purest symbol of the Persian soul. . . .

The five motor-cars which had stood with the "Wanderer" in the courtyard of the hotel overnight were already well on their way to Bagdad. As, however, the road made a steep ascent to Kirmanshah, our next stopping-place, I managed on my machine to catch them all up, one after another, before we had reached the nearest pass.

The common route and goal, the meetings at meal-times, and above all the necessity of coming to each other's assistance in cases of mishap or danger—all combine to bring together like a family the different parties travelling along these roads in motor-cars at the same time. So it was with our column, and it seemed to me only natural that among all these new Fords and handsome Buicks my badly-battered little machine should come to be looked upon as a sort of little *gamin*, and that I should have all kinds of fatherly advice and well-meant warnings bestowed on me. The worthy occupants of the motor-cars were all the more astonished when the "Child" of the family went clattering past them half-way up to the pass, with the presumptuous greeting of "Au revoir at Kirmanshah!"

On the summit I made a halt. In the depths below the Samasab river wound its way snake-wise through the plain; all around me the silvery rocks glimmered and glistened, for the cleansing wind of the pass blows away every particle of decomposition from the surface of this Phyllite stone and the grains of sand polish it in their flight like a mirror. It was in truth a fairyland of seeming glass and silver—a strange

[1] The famous Arab philosopher and physician, b. 980, d. 1037.

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contrast to the dark granite mountain ranges towards the north-west in Kurdistan. In front of me, at my feet, lay an irregularly formed basin of chalk and sandstone, in which the cold colour scheme of white and brownish-red predominated. Only far off in the south did it take on a warmer tone, for there the long-drawn chain of mountains sank down in violet shadows which melted away on the horizon. All forms dissolved into this hue and only one strangely-shaped cone stood out conspicuously. This was evidently the horn-shaped peak of Behistun, which yielded the material for the famous sculptures of the time of the Achämenides.

A sharper touch in the wind warned me to make a fresh start. I pulled up the collar of my cloak and took farewell of this palace of silver and began my descent of the steep, serpentine road, about 1000 metres in length, which took me down to the plains. I covered the distance so swiftly that I could see no trace behind me of any member of our "family."

Just as I was approaching the next village, some soldiers sprang in front of me on the road and, with loud shouts and vigorous gesticulations, called on me to stop. In vain I endeavoured to understand from their cries what was the meaning of their strange conduct. At last one of them told me in French that I was accused of having ridden, "with evil intention," in such a way on the pass near Hamadan as to knock a lorry over into the gully. I laughed loudly and replied that, with all the evil intentions in the world, my little machine could not have accomplished such a misdeed. And I made to get on to my saddle again. Thereupon, however, the leader arrested me with all the ritual of Persian ceremony while his men took possession of my cycle.

A succession of hoots warned us to get to the side of the road, and a Ford car, with a coffin dancing about on it, came buzzing along. Its driver stopped at once, much surprised to find the "Child" in such a plight. When the soldiers

explained to him in elaborate detail the accusation that had been made against me he also laughed and proceeded to make a brilliant speech in my defence. Once again the power of Persian eloquence had its due effect and long before the discourse was completed my guards had set me free and begun to help me on to my cycle and to start it again, seeming greatly rejoiced that the affair was to end so happily.

Beyond Kengawer, where I made a short halt to eat some grapes and bread, I caught up Niklas, the Russian chauffeur, who was taking a lorry laden with baggage to the frontier. He wanted to be in Chanekin within three days and to hand back to me two boxes of mine which he had with him, so that I might send them on by railway to Bagdad. After that I put on speed as it was still seventy or eighty miles to Kirmanshah. The road went along by the course of the river Gamasab; at Behistan I at last reached the open steppe and proceeded without any further halt or delay to Kirmanshah.

I put up at an Armenian hotel, attended to my cycle, and asked for some petrol. "Russian or English petrol?" I was asked. "Russian?" I exclaimed, astonished. And it was explained to me that the Russians, from motives of prestige, were now supplying petrol in southern Persia at a heavy loss in order to undersell the English. Naturally I rejoiced at being the third party who benefited in this duel.

While I was having dinner, the hotel-keeper with much circumstance brought me a glass of wine. I was feeling ill and in pain. For a long time past I had suffered from intense exhaustion very often of an evening through having overstrained my powers during the day, and had felt unable to move a limb. But while my body seemed almost crippled by the leaden burden of this fatigue, the workings of my mind would sometimes attain the highest pitch of intensity. Mental impressions would force themselves upon me which seemed entirely unrelated to my actual existence of the moment.

Quite unexpectedly and without any predisposing cause that I could trace, some picture from the war or from my home would present itself to me, absolutely faithful in its colouring in all its details—never in my life had I experienced the like before. On this present occasion it was a vision of a father-like friend that appeared to me out of the darkness of months of oblivion. In the light of a lamp standing on a piano, I saw his face and head stand out as distinctly as those of a statue. He was bending his head over a violin, and at the same moment the strains of a sonata which he and I years ago loved to play together reached my ears. But why should this vision have disturbed and troubled me so much, seeing that it recalled to me hours of the deepest happiness and peace? I felt ashamed of myself for surrendering so completely to such nervous weakness. I pulled myself together and made my way quickly down to the Bazaar.

Darkness had already sunk over the town and the Mullah had called the faithful to prayer. The business life of the place was ending for the day. The shop-people were putting up their creaking shutters, a few belated customers were moving like shadows to the fruit stalls, only a petroleum lamp here and there still gleamed through the dark veil which was enveloping everything. Under the great central dome, beneath which meet all the ramifying passages of the Bazaar, I stood leaning against a pillar. In a shop opposite me an old man was letting coppers and silver coins pass through his fingers by the faint light of his lamp, reckoning up what his day's labours had brought him. Quite close to me a sunburnt young Persian spread out a small rug on the ground, upon which he proceeded to kneel down and pray devoutly. In the dimly-lit passage waited a veiled woman, who spoke in a soft, musical voice to her children, soothing them. The night wind blew refreshingly through the halls and seemed to sweep away all the day's cares and troubles. A deep sense of peace had come with the evening. But that vision which

had so moved me never left me. Still I saw my friend's clear gaze rest upon me with that strange expression in his eyes which I could not account for. . . . Months later I was to learn that on this very evening my friend died!

Early next morning, almost before the rising sun had conquered the night's frost in the valley of Kirmanshah, I was on my cycle. Past a Customs station, up a naked rocky height, down into a broad, green depression, and then again up a hill, the chalk of which, reduced to powder, lay thick upon the road—so I went, now up, now down, now over lowlands, now over highlands, until at last I turned into the Kerind Valley towards the north-west. In places the roads had become very bad. My back was aching in spite of the long halts which in my fatigue I felt forced to make more and more frequently. My saddle-springs were now broken and this caused me to feel the full force of every jolt. It was clear from the heaps of big stones that there had never been any kind of road-mending done here. Things being so, I preferred to shove.

The scenery now was quite different. Already I had come upon the first scanty bushes, and then here and there a few isolated dwarf oaks. Then suddenly looking up I saw a delightful leafy wood up above. The water coming down from the Zagros mountain-chain had given life to the whole countryside. Pasture lands, reedy marshes, gardens, and tilled fields—this was a new kind of Iran and indescribably refreshing to my eyes after my 800 or 900 miles of steppes and deserts.

Now I drew near, along a road thousands of years old, to the gateway into Persia, standing at a height of 1900 metres and approached by a long, steady ascent. Perhaps this Kerind road is the oldest mountain road in the whole world. Small clumps of oak grew all along. The last curve of all I took on the second speed, then I turned the motor off and began

the descent to the valley, soon stopping, however, spellbound by the view.

A thousand yards below curved the Älmänd River. Immediately beneath me the mountain's side was almost precipitous. I dropped a stone over it and could not hear it fall. And against this bastion there seemed to rise aloft the threatening crests of a long line of mighty breakers about to burst on it. In another minute might they not advance and dash over it in fury? But no, there was no danger. They were but waves of stone, cold and motionless stone—sandstone and gipse and chalk.

Lessening and lessening in height, these stone waves stretched right away to the horizon, where they broadened out into a limitless plain floating in gold and violet: the wilderness of Irak. Here Irak ended. What lay before me was another world. Behind me sank the mountains, the broad valleys, the cool nights, the supple and pliable Persians; before me rose interminable plains and deserts of a new type, days still more scorching, and the birthplace of the proud Bedouins. The gates of Persia were closed behind me.

Once again I allowed my gaze to rest upon the parched oaks, the sight of which filled me with home-sickness, and even while I was making the descent, my eyes were so spellbound by the longed-for green that I paid too little attention to the narrow, serpentine road. So it happened that, taking a curve too widely, the machine and I went over into the gully.

This tumble resulted in the smashing of the iron rods which I had turned to account in Teheran as substitutes for my long-lost pedals—the right-hand rod had carried the indispensable foot-brake. Now I sat by the roadside trying what I could do to mend the damage. At last I contrived so to adjust the foot-brake that I could work it with my hand. Then I proceeded cautiously to descend again, with my feet dangling down for want of pedals.

In the Kurdish villages the inhabitants, who looked like

wild highwaymen, were on the look-out for motor-cars. They turned out to be very friendly folk. They offered their help to those travellers who could not get up the steep roads, and this shoving up of cars had become so profitable a pursuit that many well-situated villages were exclusively dependent upon it.

Downwards, downwards, downwards I progressed unceasingly, adapting myself almost unconsciously to the thousand and one eccentricities of the road, until at last I reached the bank of a swollen stream. I felt convinced that there must be a crossing-place somewhere near, but for hundreds of yards to either side I sought in vain for sight of either ford or bridge. And I failed also in all my attempts to make the Kurds understand what I wanted, as they and I had no language in common. I was standing with some of them, trying fruitlessly to make my meaning intelligible, when a sheik came upon the scene, riding on a black horse. His appearance struck awe into them and they bowed down before him. Pointing to him with their fingers, they now seemed to wish to intimate to me that he would be able to give advice and help. Although he scanned me with undisguised hostility, I spoke to him in Turkish and he understood quite well. His dark countenance quite lit up when he heard I was a German, and he explained how I should find a small bridge some hundreds of yards away which the underwood had concealed from me before. He was so delighted to hear once more about Germany that he did not want to part with me and I had to accompany him to the nearest tea khan, where he discoursed to me regarding the German soldiers by whose side he had fought in the war. He rattled off the names of the heroes of the German " Storm-battalions " in Persia—well-known names which sounded very strange thus modified and given forth with a Persian accent : Djünemann, Dsugmair, Niedrmair. . . .

Meanwhile, quietly and in the most matter-of-course

fashion, the entire population of the village had gathered close round us, and, with countless expressions of pleasure or of regret, the sheik interpreted to our eager listeners all that I was able to tell in reply to his questions regarding the destinies of my countrymen. When at last I had to take leave, as I was obliged to get on to Kasr-i-Schirin, he asked to be allowed to accompany me at least as far as the bridge. And the entire company of Kurds went with us thither composedly, as though it were the most natural thing in the world that they should do so.

The unsteady wooden bridge, not more than two spans in width, was meant only for foot-passengers, so that I had to shove the cycle with the utmost care, maintaining my balance on the edge. Now the Kurds began to take action: while the sheik, mounted on his horse, called out orders from the bank, twenty brown hands stretched out to grasp the machine and twenty naked feet sought to get foothold on the swaying bridge. A shout of command from the sheik and with a vigorous united pull the machine flew forward—in fact so vigorously did the brave fellows pull that it flew right off the side of the bridge and dragged me with it! I had in vain been making a desperate effort to catch hold of the handle-bars.

When I rose from the water again, I saw the group of helpers in despair over what had happened, but no one was giving a thought to one poor Kurd who had lost his balance near me and who was now making spasmodic attempts to climb up on the bridge. As for the machine, it had quite disappeared in the stream.

But the incident was to have a happy ending, and in quite a short time we were all standing together on the other side of the stream, none the worse for it all, with the voluble sheik; and the little rivulets of water that ran down from my clothes and the machine amused me so much that I roared with laughter. Whereupon the Kurds also recovered

their spirits and when I bade them good-bye we shook hands heartily. That was a language we all understood.

I proceeded now over a smooth road as far as Serpul, where once again I came upon a river. This time there was a bridge, but on both sides the entrance to the bridge was blocked by big stones. I was still about twenty paces from it when the inhabitants of the adjoining village began shouting at me with vehement signs to stop. I went forward hesitatingly. In the midst of the gesticulating people stood an English car, to whose driver I addressed myself enquiringly. He also could not understand a word the natives were saying, but he explained that he preferred to ford the stream with his car, as they were evidently trying to make us understand that the bridge was seriously damaged. As my clothes were still not quite dry after my recent bath, I decided to wait and let him make the crossing first. Naturally he got stuck in the middle of the stream, and the Kurds, who seemed to have counted on this, immediately sprang to his help, removed the saturated baggage from the car, carried it over to the other bank, and then dragged up the car itself. Having done all this and been handsomely rewarded with *baksheesh*, they proceeded to make their way back to me.

So now it was my turn, and I began to make ready for the wet journey across, wrapping up the magnetos carefully in oil-cloths, when suddenly to my surprise I saw a native guiding his camel over the barricading stones and crossing the bridge calmly without any trouble. This made me give a scrutinizing look at the masonry of the pillars supporting the bridge—I could see no sign of a crack or flaw in them. So I at once removed some of the big stones in my way, made my way on to the bridge and crossed it safely, despite a renewal of the wild shouts of the people, which now sounded more like rage than warnings. On the other bank I stopped a Persian officer who knew some French and asked him whether the bridge was really dangerous. "You see the

TWO PORTRAITS OF THE KHAZI FROM KANDAHAR

warning signs, Monsieur," he replied. "But if one gets over with a motor-cycle or even with a camel?"—"You were lucky." Not until I told him point-blank that the villagers had been up to a clever stratagem to enable them to earn money by helping the traffic like their fellow-tribesmen at the pass did he answer smilingly, half-shyly, half-confidentially: "But don't repeat it, Monsieur!"

I now rode downwards over treeless hill country along the Almänd. Twilight was falling swiftly; the Zagros mountains behind me were still aglow from the rays of the setting sun, but the colours soon died down and the old watch-towers along the road seemed to rise from the grey background like ghost-like black shadows.

But I kept putting on speed in order to reach the frontier before midnight. Suddenly a file of soldiers barred my way. "*Aksham!*" It was evening! Owing to the insecurity of the neighbourhood, they had to stop all traffic here during the night. *Aksham!* So it was time for me and my cycle to have our rest. The soldiers now began to fish out their supper from a steaming bowl, while I enjoyed a couple of eggs which they procured for me from a Kurdish camp hard by. I then spread out my covering beside the machine and listened to the strains of mournful singing which came over to me from the watch-hut. Presently the light of the stars began to shine, and with the stars came stillness. *Aksham!*

As the frontier was not quite twenty miles away, I had no great need to ride quickly the following morning. I put on a little extra speed only when I espied the black tents of the Kurds, for one is always warned to be careful of these nomad races, and the wildness of their outward appearance inclines one to believe the stories of attacks and robberies told about them. I myself had not suffered any harm at their hands indeed, and I asked myself why they should trouble to perpetrate highway robberies when they could earn a legitimate,

if indeed modest, livelihood by helping the traffic over difficult bits of the road. As I proceeded on my way, I frequently saw Kurdish women breaking stones on the road; the older women seemed to do their work quite mechanically as they sat there gossiping, while some young girls carried out the movements as lightly and gracefully as though they were playing marbles. As a rule such a group was under the supervision of an elderly man who stood idle at a distance. His whole task consisted in bearing the responsibility, and yet his dark, melancholy eyes and careworn demeanour seemed to suggest that this was a much harder task than breaking stones in the heat of the Persian sun.

It had become warm again since I had left the highland region. While the mountain peaks in the interior of Persia had long been under snow, the sun was giving out a heat here, especially in the middle of the day, which I was to find almost insupportable when I reached Bagdad. I had not indeed yet reached the plains of Mesopotamia. The last hills, with their ruined watch-towers on their rounded summits, gradually became lost to sight.

At a turn in the road I discovered that my hand-brake—which had previously been my foot-brake—was not working. Although a halt in this ill-famed wilderness did not seem tempting, I got off and busied myself getting it to rights. An uncomfortable feeling that I was being watched caused me to look up after a few minutes. About twenty-five yards away stood a Kurd with his piercing eyes fixed on me and following with a hostile expression my slightest movements. Seemingly the soldiers had been right in putting me on my guard. The man's hair, only partly hidden by his lamb's-skin cap, was already grey, but he was of Herculean build and strength apparently. We stood looking at each other for a while. I felt that an attempt to flee on this open, level plain would not be very promising, but it seemed the best plan available. Quickly I tied the brake to my saddle and mounted,

whereupon the Kurd, with a sudden movement, came towards me. I was getting ready to defend myself when he gave out tremblingly the word "*Baksheesh! Baksheesh!*" Was he then only a beggar after all? Not feeling too sure, I threw him hastily a coin and sped away. He, however, letting the coin fall in the dust, gave out a cry of fear and darted away to the side. The poor wretch, it seemed, had been even more frightened of me than I was of him!

The ruins of Kasr-i-Schirin had just come into view in the light of the noonday sun when my motor stopped work. By dint of shaking and blowing, I succeeded in getting a little more petrol to flow out of the almost empty tank. This enabled me to get as far as the Customs-house station at a snail's rate. A stranger greeted me there cordially in Russian, having noted my nationality from the little flag I carried on the machine. Assuming an air of mystery, he invited me to accompany him to the caravanserai, where he said he had a surprise in store for me. When we entered the courtyard, he pointed out to me "his" motor-car, and to my delight and astonishment I beheld a big German motor-lorry. It was the principal car of those brought from Berlin to Ispahan by the famous Schünemann on his difficult journey into Persia. With this Russian chauffeur in charge of it, the car was now being used to carry goods for the recently founded manufactory. And while he talked to me about German activities in Ispahan, I gazed musingly upon the two German brothers, so comically unlike, standing there side by side, in the courtyard, the big Schünemann affair and my little "Wanderer!"

I had to wait three days for my boxes. They had now to be sent to Chanekin by motor-car. Only from that place could they go by train to Bagdad.

Together with Niklas I sought shelter for the night in the next caravanserai. Flexible leaves rustled in the breeze, the outlines of slender plants stood out in black against a background of smoke-dark walls—I beheld the first cluster of

date palms which I had yet met with on my journey. In its shade could be descried a number of pale, quiet men encamped in tents: they were Armenians—a few groups of outcasts who had managed to survive the privations of a pent-up life in the concentration camps of the Mesopotamian wilderness. With scanty means they had made their way to this point and were waiting now until someone out of pity and kindness should take them to the Armenian Republic, their new home.

Only one thought could now brighten their eyes and give life to their voices: that new Armenia in which they were to find a home in happiness and freedom. As I had had a glimpse of their little Free State on my journey, I had to sit up late in the night telling them about it.

Early next morning I began my journey over the desert. Over a small bridge, past one more palm-grove—the last—and through a wide depression, the extremities of which were bordered by a hilly region: such was my approach to the unending tableland. Even the road now came to an end. A broad zone, stretching to about 500 metres across, did indeed indicate by the wheel-ruts the general line of traffic, but these tracks branched off so frequently that one could not trust to them. So I reckoned by my map the direction in which lay Bagdad, took my compass in my left hand and allowed myself to be carried off into space.

The ground was different from that of the Persian wastes, where the heaps of loose sand and sharply-pointed stone had been such a terror to me: mica-schist, blown down from the Zagros mountain-range, had formed together with the sand into clay, so that wheeled traffic could fly along over this firm surface, often as smooth as a mirror, with miraculous rapidity.

My machine flew along as it never had flown before. Soon every sign of life and motion had vanished. I was lost in an endless monotony of yellow and violet.

A sense of infinity comes over you when you gaze down upon an immense expanse from the summit of a high mountain; you have the same feeling when voyaging alone upon some distant ocean, but it affects you more strongly still out in the wilderness. For beneath the loftiest peak the floating mists surround other heights and, when they rise, reveal the valley; upon the most distant sea you have the life of the waves, followed by swiftly moving clouds. But the wilderness has nothing save the illimitable emptiness of the heavens and the endless monotony of the sand. It is formless, lifeless, unchanging—it remains so silent and void in its eternal death that the traveller almost believes the world has ceased to revolve. . . .

It was strange to reflect that in this land of the sternest and loneliest death, fruitful life should once have bloomed. Here and there I came upon the last scanty traces thereof in the form of canals which had fallen into decay. What remained of them could call forth no real idea of the grand scale on which the irrigation measures of those days were carried out. Where the canal beds traversed the sand, the wide traffic ruts narrowed down into a fan-like shape, leading unfailingly to a bridge or convenient crossing of the canal. Soon even these hollows will have been filled in with sand, soon even these last memorials of the hand of man will have been wiped out by the immense nothingness which now surrounded me.

It seemed to me that Bagdad must still be far away, as I still could see nothing before me but the smooth, yellow sand. Suddenly, however, there was a glimpse of green upon the horizon, and yet surely it was impossible that the Tigris could be so close at hand? I began to laugh at myself. Had I not heard all that travellers had to tell about mirages! Did I not know about the physical laws which caused these fallacious images to appear before the eye? And here I was being led away into ecstasy over my nearness to my

journey's end! I must get on and not allow myself to be thus deluded.

And yet I really did seem to have got nearer it, for the contours of white houses now rose up from above the green, and below them shimmered the line of what looked like a river. Could these visions be mirages merely? The plastic definiteness of the picture caused me to put aside the arguments of my reasoning faculties. Perhaps I had strayed a little from the right direction and was now in sight of the first oases outside Bagdad? I was becoming convinced that this must be so: I made my way down into a shallow depression in which I wanted to turn my cycle round—when in a moment the whole fascinating vision vanished! Then again it was revived and yet again and again. It kept returning times without number. At last, to the left of the place where the Fata Morgana had been tricking me, there did at last appear an indubitable cluster of palms, a quite unmistakable strip of grass or brushwood—this time there could be no possible illusion, it was too near. Joyfully I pushed the cycle in the direction of the Tigris. Already I could distinguish the dark river from the bright green and silver ground, already the outlines of the long sword-blades of the palm-leaves stood out against the deep blue sky—but no! Once again it all vanished from my sight as I went up over a little hillock. In the hollow beyond, I wanted to turn round, but now the vision reappeared once more, nearer still and in more vivid colours, as it seemed to me, and in the completest physical reality. At full speed I rode towards it. Once again it vanished, once again it returned. After a quarter of an hour or so, exhausted, I abandoned the chase of the lovely phantom.

These fruitless adventures had led me a good deal out of my way. Now I took the direction of Bagdad carefully again by my compass and started out afresh at a good rate. At last I did really and truly reach the first oasis. The rich

green of their palms showed up effectively, with the white of the houses, against the blue and gold of sky and sand. Brown, naked children sat or played about in the narrow streets—they looked at the strange machine in dumb astonishment. Women removed their veils and lowered their water-cruches from their shoulders to gaze at me. Only the Bedouins, splendidly proportioned figures, striding along like kings in their imposing turbans, gave my cycle and me a single haughty glance.

And so on again! By a strange fatality, just beyond this oasis, at a point where the road was hundreds of yards broad and not a tree nor a house was to be seen, I nearly had a collision which might have been disastrous. I was going ahead full tilt when I suddenly saw an English motor-car coming in my direction. It must have been travelling at about the same rate, for in a few seconds it was quite near, coming straight at me! Without slackening speed, I swerved to my right. The Englishman simultaneously swerved in the same direction. I went still further to my right—so did the Englishman. We were now only a few yards apart. To prevent a collision, I put on my brake full strength—and the sudden jerk resulted in a fall. I heard the Englishman's brake creaking at the same moment. The moment after I was right in front of the wheels of his car!

It had all happened in a quite incredibly short space of time and upon an expanse so wide that such an incident seemed absolutely inconceivable. So much so that, for a few seconds, we looked at each other in speechless astonishment. Then I got to my feet and, while I was shaking the sand from my clothes, the Englishman began to abuse me violently. However, I was indebted to him for one piece of information which he gave me incidentally, namely, that driving in Irak you keep to the left! I had been always observing the rule of the road which prevailed in Turkey and Persia and had been keeping to the right.

More wastes—endless wastes! Presently, however, I saw whirling clouds of dust on the horizon; a long military column was advancing in my direction. Irak troops—field artillery and excellent cavalry, recruited entirely from the native population—were beginning their manuœvres. In a few minutes the dust hid them from my sight. Putting my cycle once again at full speed, I passed now some old camping-huts which had been occupied by German soldiers during the war. And, behind them, in the distance, at last!—the tall, silvery minarets and countless cupolas of Bagdad!

When the Mohammedan pilgrim, at the end of his long and painful journey across the desert, beholds thus at last the City of the Caliphs, he gives glory to God for having vouchsafed to him this Paradise, and he hastens forward to it with new fervour. My mode of travel was as free as the wind. I approached no longed-for goal, and yet at the sight of these buildings of enchanting loveliness, amidst their green palm-grvoes and against their background of gold, I fell a prey to the same emotions: Holy City!

Bagdad resounded with the noise of motor-cars and of donkey-drivers. Steamers were puffing and blowing up-stream. Troops were marching, with European smartness, through streets as broad as those of Europe. On the façades of modern Europeanized commercial buildings one saw glaring advertisements of the "Arabian Nights Cabaret." Bagdad, of which the fairy-tales set me dreaming in our childhood, has been robbed of its romance. Only traces of the real Orient survive here in some of its narrow streets, in glimpses of bronzed men wearing garments of white silk, in the beehive-shaped boats to be seen at evening time on the river. In the great complex of the city the real Orient may be seen in the horizontally divided warehouses of the Bazaar. Dust and dimness pervade, now as of yore, the over-arched passages of the Bazaar, in which every kind of trade, every craftsmen's guild, has its own street. From the colour symphony of the

THE SLEEPING BOY

PRISONERS AT PLAY

mountains of fruit—a polished apple on each peak—to the stores of silk stuffs and rugs and carpets (the styles and patterns of which the Western lands have always so much admired without really understanding them), from the ear-shattering hammering of the coppersmiths making their pots and kettles to the buzzing of the bowstring wherewith the turners make their wood rotate while they press the knife against it, from the water-carriers to the veiled ladies, from the haggling to the begging—all has remained as it used to be in the days of Haroun al Rashid. In the bustle and tumult of the Bazaar you get a new conception of time. Even the business of that brown Arab there with his Ford motor-cars is part and parcel of the East. Such is the Bazaar with its dust and dimness.

The indiscriminate juxtaposition of Eastern things of art and Western rubbish on most of the stalls has, indeed, an astonishing effect. It would be unfair to ascribe this to lack of taste on the part of the Orientals ; what it points to rather is the entirely different focus of the Occidental eye for the meaning of things. It shows how differently the Oriental thinks and feels ; in his eyes the faiences of the mosques, the arabesques of the cornices, the patterns of the carpets, even the mingling of wares in the Bazaar, are all in the nature of pictures: this world of impression is closed to us. The Oriental thinks in pictures and ornamentation, whereas we think only in ideas and conceptions. And therefore the Oriental sees the wares of the Bazaar with different eyes from ours : he does not buy the thing but what his imagination makes of the thing. What to the European, who is confined to the visual, to the actual, remains merely something to be sold, is to the Oriental a symbol of a conception and therefore is to be appraised at the value of the conception and not at its own intrinsic value. That is why the tradesman refrains from having fixed prices in the Bazaar.

In its entirety the Bazaar is like a carpet and its wares are

like the carpet's pattern; for while, like the individual motives in the pattern, the individual wares in the Bazaar seem to be all alike, on a closer investigation there are endless differences here as there. While in Europe adaptability to the purposes aimed at, together with æsthetic principles, dictate the forms, which thus become stereotyped, the Oriental continually adapts the accustomed type to new conceptions, thus giving a new meaning to it, and so on forever. Thus originate the bright colours in the Bazaar which harmonize always as upon the carpets. An animated wealth of bright colours in harmony: that was how the Bazaar of Bagdad struck me and, in so striking me, epitomized for me the entire spirit of the East.

In the streets the Arabs would stop and point at me, smiling and calling out "Alman!" as though they had known me a long time; and in the hotel the waiter, when he and I were alone, would keep close to my table to talk Turkish with me. He held forth to me regarding the blessed days when he had been in Germany as an officer's servant, and was voluble about the bonds of brotherhood between our two countries and about the longed-for return of the Germans. But whenever an Englishman came in, the waiter bowed deep to him and said—breaking off in the middle of one of his remarks to me—"Oh, yes, my Sir!" proceeding very busily to attend to some order which I had never given him.

Owing to enormous obstacles involved in the Customs regulations, I had to take the train from Bagdad to the Persian Gulf. At Bussorah, a Venice of the East, with all its canals, I went on board the steamer for India; petroleum works and transmission pipes on the left bank of the Shatelmandeb told eloquently of the modern industries there at work; on the right, mounted Bedouins, brown-skinned youths guiding their long canoes down the tributary streams, and the tall date-palms, gave the riverside the wonted aspect of the East. While, however, the long chain of the Zagros mountains

unrolled itself to its northern extremity, I lay, a victim to fever, in my cabin, besieged by all my old nightmares of danger, flight and death in Afghanistan. Fear and foreboding took complete possession of me. But the steamer unhaltingly sped onwards to the East. There was no going back for me.

At Karachi, where an over-anxious Customs examination was made into all my papers, clothes, etc.—even my exposed films and plates being all scrutinized—a great disappointment awaited me: once again I should have to abandon thoughts of riding, for the good road to Peshawur laid down during the war, of which I had heard great praise in British circles everywhere, ended, I now heard, ten miles beyond Karachi and joined there the old caravan route, impracticable for a motor-cycle, over the wastes. Once more, therefore, I had to travel by train, but I was anxious at all costs to ride at least from Lahore, where the sandy desert changes into the forest steppe of the Savans and the meadows of the Punjab.

As had happened in the case of the railway journey in Irak and in that of the voyage on the steamer, the English gave me a compartment to myself, although the train was overcrowded; evidently they thought it most desirable to prevent any communication between the natives and the German! How important a person politically I had become I was, however, not to learn until we reached the railway station at Lahore; as I was making ready to get out, an officer, accompanied by four men, stopped me, and explained that he had orders to conduct me, without any stay, to the other platform, where the train for Peshawur was already waiting. Bewildered, I followed him without being able to learn the reasons for this strange severity; with a smiling word of farewell, the officer closed the door of the compartment behind me and the train steamed out. The journey proceeded northwards over the grey-green Indus, along the lowest ranges of the Himalayas, and night began to fall. I was feeling hungry and angry; I had now not only to do

without my supper, but without the much-looked-forward-to ride through India; nor could the friendly Irish police officer, who travelled by the same train to keep me under supervision, enlighten me as to the mysterious action of the authorities. In this fashion it was that I reached the Indian frontier more speedily than I wished.

When I applied to the Political Agent at Peshawur for my permit to travel on, the precision of his questions to me showed that the English were fully informed regarding the whole course of my journey, and it was with amazement that I discovered that a thick *dossier* of papers which lay on his desk was entirely concerned with me and comprised a complete record of all my movements. However, I got my permit and was now free to begin my journey into Afghanistan. It was to be my first motor-ride for quite a long time past, and my last motor-ride for a still longer time to come!

As I had been so emphatically warned about the danger of attacks on the open roads of Afghanistan, I decided in no case to travel to Cabul alone. It happened that just at the moment a German from Cabul was in Peshawur on some business, and that he was reputed to have an unequalled knowledge of the road thither. If I was to have his company, I would have to stay on at a fabulously expensive English hotel until he was ready to start, but the desire to travel safely outweighed the anxieties evoked by my dwindling resources.

The hoar-frost lay upon the wide river-basin of Peshawur as I set forth on the well-kept-up road westwards. Above me towered the wall of the Afghan-Indian mountain frontier. I toiled up the chain of hills, 2000–3000 metres high, which connects the snow-clad giant peaks of the northerly Hindu Kush with those of the southerly Sefidkuh. In this lower ridge there was yet another declivity—a pass of wonderful efficacy, a gateway fateful for the peoples: the Khyber. It is a step leading up to the great causeway which runs through

Iran, Armenia and Asia Minor towards the west—not the only causeway, indeed, but the mightiest, for it unites also all the movements which strive towards the south over the practicable passes of the Hindu Kush from the gigantic regions of Siberia and Turkestan. While the more distant southerly approaches are impeded by steppes and wastes to the west, the heart of India on the sacred Ganges can beat over the fruitful Punjab up to this gate. Hence, until Europe threw open India's extensive shores to sea traffic, the Khyber was the principal means of entry into this land, to which the Himalayas gave water, indeed, but no road to the north. Thus it is that the Khyber, through the peculiarity of its position, binds together regions of continental magnitude, regions which constitute half of Asia and one-fifth of the inhabited world; and so it came to be an artery of the history of mankind.

What do we really know about the life which pulsed through the Khyber before the fair-haired Arians stepped down from it into India five thousand years ago? What do we know even of the state of things before Alexander's generals, Perdikkas and Hephaistion, led the Macedonian phalanx through the Khyber, while he himself remained on guard in the north? Only at a later date does history throw light upon the darkness. At this point we hear of the Indo-Scythians, who came from the north-west; of the Arabians, from the south-west; of the white Huns, from the north; of Timur and Genghis Khan, who came from the north-east; of the horseman Nadir Shah, from Demavend, and finally of the English in India.

Nor has its significance been yet exhausted, for it gives out contrasts in Nature and in humanity as strong as the imagination can conceive. The landscapes which are enclosed within the gates of Iran are, with all their differences, closely akin; the Khyber, however, leads from tropical luxuriance to the barrenness of the steppes, from deep depressions to

tremendous mountain heights, from superabundance to want, from gardens to wastes, from sheer passivity to fatalistic activity. Even a Mohammed of Ghazni, even Babur and Akbar, those mighty princes, who ruled over both sides of the Khyber, could not bring about homogeneity where Nature had dictated contrasts. Fighters born in the wild mountainous regions and steppes were tempted by the glories of the east; there the armies strived for the riches of India and won their battles on the other side of the Khyber as they had done on this side.

Yet, just as, according to the Afghan legend, Solomon did not dare to press on into India from the Soliman range, so these robber-bands, who had swept down from the pass into the valleys, curbed their horses when faced by the Savans which stretched out endlessly under the unaccustomed sun. And the others whose lust as conquerors knew no bounds? They went under—not in storms and battles, but in the peaceful plenty of the Indian expanse and of the Indian people. The mere Being of the country was stronger than all their deeds. Even the sun-gods went under whom the blond Arians had carried down into India on their shoulders, for the longed-for sunlight agonized them by its heat and the tempting affluence led them into demoralizing satiety. Wherefore the sun-seekers smashed their sun-gods and in their despair embraced the Buddhism of this new world, whose slaves they had become in Pantheism and have since remained.

While war came from the west, peace came from the east. The wisdom of Gautama, indeed, could take root in the souls of the men of the west only in so far as the power of the Punjab Princes extended or as the decay of deed-loving peoples gave room for pessimistic ideas. And yet the treasures of India, carried on the backs of Bactrian camels over the Khyber, found their way to the lands of the west. The wonderland poured out its treasures inexhaustibly, stronger

in its life-giving abundance than all the death-bringing terrors from the west.

And like the peoples in the slow sequence of the centuries, so also, in quicker rhythm of the seasons of the year, did the tribes make their way through the Khyber from the neighbouring mountains. As was already their custom a thousand years ago, the shepherds of Afghanistan still drive their flocks through the gate of India down to the valleys, accompanied by their beautiful wives and their dirty children, and their draught-animals with sores from the saddles, to which you will see a hen tied, flapping its wings distressfully. Every year in the winter they seek and find nourishment on the breast of the sacred Indra.

In the narrow Khyber, where the saddles of the caravans rubbed up against each other, there opened out the sluice through which an entire Continent streamed to the east, in the days when India was hemmed in by the impassable seas. It was not until the Europeans had discovered the sea-route and England forced her way in and established at the Khyber the frontier of her jealously-guarded wonderland, that the pass seemed to lose its greatness as a decisive factor in history; it took on the aspect then of a mere mountain pass, pure and simple, through which caravans hurried nervously because the bullets from the guns of Afridi bandits went whistling over them. But if it had lost its importance as the route eastwards and westwards it was to acquire a new and dangerous importance as a route northwards and southwards when Russia extended her empire to its eastern boundary and seemed to throw a menacing shadow over India. Then it was that England, recognizing the danger, barred the door. After the last war with Afghanistan, England secured to herself the narrow strip of adjoining country and its protecting heights, while in return guaranteeing the independence of the whole of Afghanistan. Since then she has bribed the Afridi robber-bands to act as guards

of the roads, built forts and barbed-wire defences, broken up the paths of the narrow passage and constructed new roads and even railways. To-day, therefore, the pass is closed so strongly on its northern side that it is held to be impregnable and at the same time left open to the south with such perfect strategy that at the moment of danger a big army could move westwards without thronging the passage. Thus is the Khyber set back from the centre of the world to its edge: in old days a thoroughfare for millions, to-day it is their boundary-line. But it remains still the spot where the tension between north and south must find vent. The pass has the destiny to be barred from the south and then to be reopened from the north in order to become what Nature intended it to be unchangeably: the Pass of Destiny.

The road up was steep. It wound itself upwards along the bed of what was once a river to a height of 1500 metres. This English road was so good that the heavily-laden cycle took the height merrily, then, with motor turned off, to glide downwards again to the point where between barbed wire a plain wooden board was raised with the words painted on it: "IT IS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN TO CROSS THIS BORDER INTO AFGHAN TERRITORY."

Although this prohibition was written chiefly for British subjects, it seemed to me as though it wished to give me an emphatic warning before I trod the road of my fate. In front of me spread out a landscape of overpowering magnificence. Was it surprising that with this before me I forgot the warning and my dark presentiments? I had reached the land of my desire.

The Afghan Frontier Guard scanned me coolly and in rough tones bade me accompany him, and made me push my cycle down the hundred yards or so of sandy and stony road leading to the wretched hut, constructed out of stones and roofed with tent cloth, which constituted the Frontier Guard-

SOME OF MY FELLOW PRISONERS
Something happening outside!

house. I then proceeded downwards to the spot where the Cabul river broadens out for the last time before it discharges itself into an impassable ravine through the Indian frontier mountains; here lay Dakka, and here I awaited the car of my German companion in the house of a German engineer who was at work at this exposed and dangerous post without any European associate. My Peshawur friend arrived early the next morning. While he was taking back into the car his gun, which he always brought with him from Cabul and left at the Frontier Guard-house here, the engineer gave us some parting advice; he knew enough of the dangers of the roads and the hostile bearing of the inhabitants to warn us to take the utmost possible precautions.

The new road, which was constructed under the supervision of this German, started from Dakka, and joined on soon to the old natural roads; these led through a broad valley, which the Cabul river has evacuated and strewn with boulders, and through clayey sand into which the Bactrian camels sink deep.

Now and again a party of nomads, otherwise absolute loneliness; here and there prickly camel-weeds, some wretched clay huts or a bent tamarisk tree—otherwise sheer emptiness. The scenery, so lavish in great things, had in small things nothing to offer. It was a difficult ride for both car and cycle. Over sharp stones and through sand whirled the jolting and grinding wheels until at last in the evening a park was to be descried in the midst of the barren mountain land, looking wonderfully beautiful with its rows of pines and orange and lemon trees. We had reached Nimla, the halting-place which twice yearly is visited by the Ameer and which for the rest of the time remains open for Europeans passing through.

The second day brought with it a wonderful increase in alike the beauty of the scenery and the difficulty of the road. We went up and down through steep passes. My excellent

friend and guide, who knew the way so well, always kept at the same distance behind me, continually blowing his horn to warn me against coming dangers—sudden incursions of mountain streams which had to be forded close to the shattered bridge piers, or unexpected narrow curves beneath which the debris of upset waggons could often be seen far down in the depths.

Now ascending, now descending, we had been getting steadily to higher and higher altitudes until at last, about noon, the most formidable pass of all, 3800 metres high, rose up before us. My machine ground its way up, now creeping, now jolting, now slipping, now tumbling, while with its cooler boiling hot and its motor humming heavily the car was left behind. At last we reached the less steep slopes of the pass. With a sigh of relief I turned on the second speed—then a sharp report startled me and I sprang to the ground: the inner tyre had gone flat. The rarefied atmosphere of the heights and the unceasing friction of the ascent had caused the internal pressure to become so extreme that even the outside tyre had burst. Through having forgotten in my fatigue to let a little air out of it at the foot of the mountain-side, I had involved myself in this first mishap; and from it followed now in inexorable sequence a chain of misfortunes, one worse than another, until the climax was reached in that one which nearly cost me my life.

First of all I put on the spare outside tyre which I had patched up once in Hamadan. I then went on with my companion without forebodings. As the road downwards from the pass was covered with smooth volcanic stone, I felt that the worst part of our ride was over. But my spare tyre, which the burning suns of Persia had made porous, would not keep tight. After continual fruitless pumpings, I had to make up my mind to do some repairing. It was late already and I could not ask my friend to wait so long with me, especially as I knew he had to be in Cabul that evening. He

reassured me, moreover, by declaring that here, within thirty-five miles or so of the capital, we had left the zone of robberies behind us. He told me also that I could complete the repairing work quietly and would then be able to pass the night at the next royal stopping-place, which was only about two miles further on. Next day by noon we should meet again in Cabul.

So I stayed behind alone. Whereas it had been so lonely on the road until now, while I was at work on the machine a number of men came up behind me noiselessly and gathered round me and did not seem inclined to move. I took out my repairing stuff, but the tube had got open through all the continual jolting and had made everything sticky; I should have to abandon my repairing. Glad to be able to extricate myself from the weird circle of silent shadows, I began pushing my cycle on to the halting-place. But I was so exhausted that my progress was slow. Minutes seemed to stretch into hours and there were still no signs of the Park House. At last a lorry which we had passed in the middle of the day caught me up. I told my story to the chauffeur, an Indian native, and he invited me sympathetically to travel on with him in the lorry, but it was packed so tight with iron bars that no room could be found on it for the machine. My despair increased when the Indian told me it was still seven or eight miles to the halting-place. Well, it couldn't be helped! As the lorry sped on, I got out the repairing stuff again in order to make another effort to repair the tyre.

Once more I was all alone in the sombre stillness, while, with the swiftness of the East, which knows none of the gentle nuances of gathering twilight, the night came down on me. Hastily and quite mechanically by touch, I finished off the job in the darkness and rode quickly down into the valley. Suddenly, in the dark grey ground immediately in front of me, I saw what looked like a black, gaping chasm; I had

only just time to put on the brake, when my cycle flew to one side. We were on the brink of a deep stream—my front wheel was almost into it. To my left rose the ruins of a bridge. While, trembling with fear, I contrived to get the machine across over the sharp stones, I found that the air escaped from the outer tyre. A new attempt at repairing was out of the question—I would now have to push the machine all the way. Tired to death, I shoved it along in sand, into which, unable to see, I myself kept sinking, and over invisible stones, in the darkness and treacherous solitude. At last I saw the outline of a building by the roadside ; it was certainly not like the stopping-place which my German friend had described and yet what else could it be. Leaving the cycle behind me on the road, I crept up carefully to the dark walls. They enclosed a caravanserai. A narrow entrance, a half-open door—I stood a moment looking in. I saw a slatternly room, overheated by an open charcoal fire, by the flames of which sat a couple of wild, dark figures whispering together. The fire threw a bluish-reddish light on their faces. The picture was so gruesome and repellent that I drew back so as not to be perceived, for I felt I could not venture to spend the night in such company. But I was at the end of my strength and could not have dragged the machine a hundred yards further. So that there remained nothing for me to do but find a hidden resting-place between the caravanserai and the road. This was, indeed, a perilous proceeding, for the night was still not so dark but that the machine could be seen a few paces away, and it would not do for a stranger to be found in such a solitary place. Torn in two directions by fear and deadly fatigue, I unstrapped my rug. But already a dog in the caravanserai had scented me out. It now came along yelping and was followed by the two men calling out enquiringly. Putting on an air of cool assurance, I answered in a friendly tone and asked them to help me along with the cycle to the stopping-place. After a whispered discussion they agreed

to do as I asked, while I took up my position behind them, watching closely. A few minutes later we had reached the house in the Park, but with incredible quickness, while I was getting ready to pay them, they contrived to cut the straps of my baggage and to make off with my box. By the time their retreating footsteps were heard from the house, they were out of sight.

I was welcomed with cordial pleasure by the chauffeur, who after the long hours of waiting had begun to fear the worst for me. He had just made up his mind to set out in search of me when he heard our voices outside. Now he drew me in and asked for an account of my experiences. But after a hasty supper I soon fell asleep.

When I awoke next morning the oblique rays of the November sun had already thawed the night's frost. A joyful feeling possessed me, for this was to be a red letter day in my life: to-day, after a short and easy ride, I would reach Cabul, where all the troubles of my motor-ride were to be at an end and my months of scientific exploration were to begin. Thirty kilometres more would complete my 12,000—then I should have reached my goal. Singing and whistling, I set to work patching up my tyre, while the Indian brought up his car. "We shall see each other in Cabul at noon!" he called out to me as he was starting off.

Having fixed up the back wheel again, I stood awhile, leaning on the machine and gazing towards the west, full of happy anticipations. For a year and a half I had struggled to reach this city—the city lying down there behind the ravine—a year and a half full of work and trouble, full of pains and privations, full of illness and dark forebodings. I smiled to myself. So those forebodings had proved unwarranted! And yet, as though obeying some strange impulse, I had taken my pistol out from where it had lain in my baggage, loaded it and placed it in my breast pocket. What was it that caused me to take this anxious precaution?

I was to be in Cabul by midday. . . . Thus began the end of my journey.

I was in Cabul by midday sure enough. But the preceding hours had brought to me the experience which was to make me the plaything of the Fates.

# CHAPTER IX

## FROM MY PRISON DIARY[1]

SINCE yesterday I have been imprisoned. I found a pencil and some paper but did not venture at first to write anything, thinking I might be carried off in the middle of a sentence. In my brain ran unceasingly the words: "If you are imprisoned, you will be hanged!" Now I have been imprisoned—and am waiting.

* * *

They are leaving me alone for a while—for how long I wonder? I shall try to write. This is how it came about.

As I made my way down the defile of Churd Cabul, I overtook a mule caravan and two armed horsemen. The younger of the two called out something to me laughingly in a dialect I could not understand and, just as I was about to ride on past him, put his horse to the gallop. I followed him, not putting on too much speed, for I knew from my journey through Persia how willingly and with what child-like glee the Orientals entered into a race with the unknown motor-cycle and how proud they felt when one let them imagine

[1] To the heading of this chapter in the German edition the author appended a Note justifying himself for thus making public, for the first time, the story of his imprisonment as recorded in his Diary. He explained that in selecting these extracts from his Diary he was careful to avoid the inclusion of any passages that might seem to reflect too bitterly "upon Afghanistan or Afghan justice." In the German Press there had been published inaccurate accounts of his imprisonment and trial.—*Translator*.

they were winning. Keeping always at the same distance behind the Afghan, therefore, I had time to look about me, taking in the details of my picturesque surroundings as I went; presently, thinking that the horseman must by now be a bit tired of the game, I opened the throttle in order to overtake him again. What now occurred took only a few minutes, but those minutes to my excited consciousness seemed to stretch out into an eternity!

Startled by the sudden noise of the motor, the Afghan's horse shied and bolted, its rider being unable to hold it in. I immediately slackened speed so as to let the animal have time to calm down. At the next turn of the road, however, I saw a white turban flutter to the ground and a dark body follow it, while the horse in wild frenzy went tearing away. What was I to do now? Conflicting thoughts flashed through my brain. Should I stop and help the man? This was demanded of me not merely as a German in a friendly land—mere humanity dictated it. Or should I ride on? To do so would be wiser without a doubt, for the Afghan in his anger might very easily forget that his own prank was the cause of the accident and he might in this case want to wreak revenge on me. It seemed to me that mere instincts of humanity must give way before my imperative natural desire to keep out of trouble in this country to which I had come for my scientific work. Thus my mind worked during the few seconds which passed before I reached the spot where the man had fallen. "Ride on! Ride on!" all that was selfish in me seemed to shout. If, finally, I acted otherwise, and, throwing my cycle on one side, hastened to the man's help, what decided me was the sobering reflection that the Afghan, whose hand was already grasping his gun, would assuredly have been able to put a bullet in my back as I rode away down the flat, curving road.

The Afghan did not seem to be badly hurt, for before I got near him he had sprung to his feet and was loading his gun; he now let go at me a flood of abuse only one word

FELLOW PRISONERS

ON THE WAY TO THE LAW COURT

of which, *Kafir*, I understood. *Kafir* means only "Unbeliever," but in the mouth of an enraged Mohammedan it is the worst word imaginable. In reply, I threw out the magical word "German," which hitherto had served to lighten the darkest looks that I had encountered. The Afghan retorted by levelling his gun at me. I was near enough now to seize the gun-barrel with both hands and force it downwards. And the Afghan, bewildered by the friendly demeanour I still contrived to maintain, listened to my quietly spoken words and silently allowed me to examine his bruises.

I thanked my stars that I was now master of the field. I had only to turn this first victory to account and the battle was won. Quite close at hand ran a small gully temptingly. How would it be to shove him into it bodily and be off? Friends ask me now why I did not do so and I ask myself the same question—too late! At the moment I wanted to behave well at all costs. I tried, therefore, to bring about a friendly understanding: a kind word, a frank encounter of the eyes had so often saved me in unpromising situations. But the Afghan's eyes would not meet mine and my next effort to soothe him drove him again into fury. Now, I said to myself, there was only one way out of it: money. And I made to get out my purse. As I did so, he sprang to his feet again and pointed his gun at me. With a quick sidewards movement I again grasped the barrel with my left hand to turn it aside. The Afghan pulled it back violently out of my hand; I drew my loaded pistol from my breast pocket and threatened to fire unless the Afghan lowered his gun. He made a snatch at my pistol, which I now held behind his back. We were now breast to breast, our hot breath mingling. I still held his gun-barrel in my left hand. Now, with both his, he pressed his gun steadily against my hip, thus crippling my left arm. Another moment and his gun might go off! I must shoot first! My heart was filled with bitterness—all the happiness

I had had in my journey, all the hopes I had based on it, all the sacrifices I had made, were to be blasted. This shot would ruin everything. I must act warily, weighing all the consequences. I knew from the war how you may render your antagonist harmless without killing him—you shoot him in the right shoulder-blade. And I reflected on the piercing power of my revolver. I should have to shoot into the Afghan's back, and if I did not take care the bullet might pierce me also. Into his right shoulder-blade then! I must fire! And quick!

As the shot rang out, the Afghan's right arm dropped, and he himself collapsed on the ground. He had still strength to point his gun at me, but I was now able to wrest it out of his grasp. I had hardly had time to free myself when the mule caravan which I had passed began to come round the bend of the road. In front of it strode the second rider, his horse's bridle in his left hand, his gun in his right. We stood looking at each other in silence for a moment; I pointed to the wounded man and his gun and then to my smoking pistol. He remained standing quite still, taking the matter in, and rested the butt of his gun on the ground, while I went to raise up my cycle. The wounded Afghan was gesticulating now like a madman. I pulled up my machine and began shoving it. If the motor did not get started now I was done for. But it started all right. I kept looking round steadfastly at the Afghan while some good fairy steered my machine on its course between rocks and gully, and once out of gun-shot range went ahead at top speed: for I knew now that there was only one goal for me—the German Embassy in Cabul. There I should at once report what had happened.

By noon I was actually in Cabul, as the friendly chauffeur had prophesied. But I had no smiles for him when we met.

And why do I write all this? Because my conscience calls me to account? No, I feel and know that I am free from all

blame. Or so that this defence may be found after my death? It is a matter of indifference to me what happens after my death.—There is a fairy-tale about a Princess who became a goose-girl and who unburdened herself of her woe to an iron stove. Thus I am recording my trouble on a dirty piece of paper—it is all the same. And now I recall something else from that fairy-tale—the talk between Falada and the Princess: "O Falada, thou that hangest . . ." and how it ended: "If thy mother knew, the heart in her body would break——"[1]

* * *

It is evening. For hours already I have been standing on the brink of eternal darkness. If they do not soon strike me, I shall go mad. Madness no longer has anything terrible about it: it involves happy oblivion. I used to shudder at the thought of it; now I yearn for it. But I can forget nothing. Least of all the mountains outside. The scenery of Afghanistan recalls that of Persia; it comprises the same elements, but so intensified, magnified to such immense, such cosmic, proportions! Oh, those tremendous mountains towering up into the sky! One could almost imagine oneself upon another planet in this bare, naked, interminable, overpowering mountain-land. But no, I am in this same dreadful world, although only this small cell in it now is mine. An empty hutch and no more. And yet, yes!—an electric bulb in the ceiling, to which the soldiers called my attention triumphantly, and, in addition, the curtain made of newspapers which I myself put up to protect myself from the cold curiosity of my guard on the floor. Hard by, the Mullah, my overseer, is

[1] "Falada" was the name of the Princess's horse when she was taken captive and turned into a goose-girl. The horse was killed and its head hung over the city-gate, by which she passed every day. She would speak to the head and it would reply. Heine refers to this in one of his poems in his *Deutschland.—Translator.*

praying for me in a monotonous voice. For my life or for my death ?

They have left a guard with me also in my cell. But this soldier, who squats in a corner and watches all my movements in astonishment, is a man of such delicate feeling that he does not venture to pray in my presence. When he hears the Faithful called to prayers outside, my soldier stands up sighing, nods to me, raises his arms to the ceiling, strokes his beard with another sigh and goes out. When I was brought hither, he had to wake two occupants of the cell with kicks and turn them out . . . They had slept on the floor. . . . That it should be possible to sleep here !

Now they have put a bed here for me and a metal basin with charcoal cinders glowing in it. The fumes from it have given me an unbearable headache. I have fellow-prisoners ; two flies keep on buzzing in my cell—they torture me. But I dare not kill them, one becomes Buddhistic here. And in this sacred sensitiveness for the life of others, one's own self cries out for Life. Oh, Life !

* * *

A new morning. I am feverish and have a violent headache after a sleepless night. I made a thousand plans and discarded them all again. But some kind of irrational hope, without any kind of basis, still remained. Then the dawn began pallidly and a faint light brought out the framework of the window in blacker lines : a dark, menacing cross. In front of my cell my guard was monotonously singing bars of a meaningless tune. I don't know why the cold morning light and the singing soldiers made so strong an impression on me : in that minute I broke down completely.

Again I was called before the Commandant and he again required me to allow myself to be photographed in Afghan costume. Again I refused. The Commandant shook his

head disapprovingly: "You forget," he said, "that you are making your painful position worse." Is that possible?

* * *

I take up my Diary continually to write in it. There are, indeed, no incidents to record in it. Since the terribly swift succession of events in Cabul time has stood still for me. Hours of emptiness, days of emptiness—then a final event and all will be over. I believe no longer in any future, the present is dead for me, and the past calls up only spectres of evil hours. These, however, are not to be got rid of. . . . However my narrative is not yet completed.

After I had reached Cabul the great question arose: should the case be communicated to the Afghan authorities or withheld from them? Opinions were divided, but I gladly fell in with advice from an experienced quarter that I should supply particulars immediately. But there was another difficulty. The laws of Afghanistan do not recognize circumstantial proof; it demands in support of the plea of self-defence two eye-witnesses, and these I lacked. I was therefore advised to take the line that I was acting certainly in self-defence but that, in addition, I had wounded the Afghan unintentionally. I had, therefore, to maintain that my pistol had gone off in the course of my struggle with the Afghan through his fault. I shrank from an untruth in making so weighty a deposition, but I recognized at once that as I knew nothing about Afghan law, I must listen to the words of my experienced counsellor. So I did.

The greatest difference of opinions of all, however, was in regard to this: most of my countrymen in Cabul advised me to get out of the country as soon as possible—even before making my deposition—and wait safely beyond the frontier to see if any proceedings were to be taken against me from the Afghan side. But the friend who had advised about the deposition reassured me; he urged me to remain: as I was

in the right, he declared, I did not need to flee from anyone. So I remained. The days went past and I was no longer feeling nervous. Then the news suddenly came that the Afghan was dying and had been taken to a hospital in Cabul. Dying? From a revolver bullet through the right shoulder-blade? No time was left me now for deliberation, for an utterance of the Vali was simultaneously communicated to me: "Should the wounded man die, the German must be hanged." So my life was at stake. My countrymen were now all of one mind: "If they imprison you, they will hang you." My friend also now favoured flight. He advised me to flee that night into the mountains. What an agonizing journey that was through the mountains at night! After eighteen hours I found the motor-car which was awaiting me far from Cabul and its streets. I got into it and drove to the frontier. The men on duty there, however, had had time to receive orders to stop me. I had lost the game. They took me back in triumph to Cabul. The cool morning sun was upon the mountain peaks and I drank in the beauty of the scenery like one who sees mountains and the broad heavens for the last time. The Afghan officer watched me with cold interest and shrugged his shoulders: "Our mountains are fine," he said. "Have a good look at them. You won't have much more time for doing so"—And then came imprisonment.

* * *

Hours have grown into days. What have I thought and done in them? I shall say nothing about that; the memory of this agony comes up before me and threatens to crush me. Suffice it, that the hours have passed. But I ought not to be so much alone; I am not strong enough for that. The prisoners are allowed to meet here either in the central courtyard or on the terraces outside—they even visit each other in their cells; for all the doors are open and lead to the courtyard.

What ensures the prisoners this narrow measure of social life are the religious rites which no court of law dares to ignore To-day, therefore, I will go out on the roof in front of my cell where my fellow-prisoners sit shivering in the pale sun between the hours of prayer; I will go down into the courtyard where they wash their rags in the little stream of prayer-ablutions and where they gossip. It seems to me that I have even heard them laughing.

* * *

In the evening. What good did it do me? All, all were out in the sun. They gossiped together, and comforted each other in their troubles, they were all so friendly together. And in truth they were really able to laugh. But they held aloof from me; I am to them the Unbeliever, the Unclean, the *Kafir*. So I see myself excluded from the society of my companions in misfortune, from the society of the very poorest. And in the open space which fear and horror of me left all round me, I walked up and down, up and down—illimitably alone.

* * *

I must work, and as I have no other book available except my English travelling dictionary, I take it up to study. Daisy, *Gänseblümchen*;—in a few months they will be appearing again in the meadows at home. Dawn, *Dämmerung*, *Erwachen*; Daybreak, *Tagesanbruch*;—why should I learn this, as Evening has come for me, almost Night? Dear, *lieb*, *teuer*;—a word to make one weep. Death, *Tod*;—has it been possible for any one to write this word in a dictionary coldly and unmoved? Must not his hand have trembled—the pen dropped out of his fingers? Death, *Tod*;—does no one suspect what this word means?

* * *

After the Afghans' evening prayer, I went out once again. Conversations died away at the sight of me, groups broke up, I was everywhere given a wide berth, and the same unfriendly whispers followed me continually. So I left the courtyard for the terrace, hoping to meet and disturb nobody there: up there a quite young man was sitting by himself; he, also, I had noticed, was avoided by the others yesterday. From my cell I have often observed him; generally he was mending his old rags or sat shivering in the faint sun, his gaze directed vacantly into the distance. But to-day he was seriously engaged: he was getting rid of his lice. He was deliberately tightening his breeches round his thigh, catching one louse after another and setting them out in rows to his left. I watched him silently; for the first time since I had been here I felt a slight sense of amusement. Then suddenly as though awaking from sleep, the young man bent forward and called out a word which I did not understand. Then he threw down his head on his drawn-up knees and wept. I, however, flew back to my cell.

Did I say I did not understand the word? I know he was calling out to his mother!

It is a bad spirit that lies over the walls of the prison. Woe to him whose soul it takes captive! That man is lost—he sinks into his sorrow like a drop into the sea. One thing I have learnt: I must not weep, I must not complain, I must not think of my fate. I must work until I cease to think. I asked the overseer for books. Unsuspecting of the irony which lay in the gift, they presented me with a book of extracts, *The Pleasures of Life*. Where did the volume come from, I asked. "It belonged to another European who was imprisoned here," came the reply, "he also had killed a believer"—"I know, but my case was different; I was defending my own life."—"We believe the account given by the man who died and it sounds differently."—"What did he say?"—"That you wanted to rob him and that while trying to do so,

THE DERVISH

THE MALIK

you shot him."—" I wanted to rob the poor bandit? And you say that without laughing? " But their faces remained serious and sombre and they made no reply.

* * *

This morning early I read in *The Pleasures of Life:* Epictetus: " Thou canst throw my body into prison but my soul even Zeus himself cannot subdue." A saying from which new strength flowed into me. With revived courage I set myself to my study of the English language. In the midst of it I had however to begin watching again the unhappy youth who incarnates for me the spirit of the prison. Again he was sitting in a corner of the terrace where he could get some of the thin sunshine. This time he was amusing himself by letting some copper coins slip through his brown hands. Sometimes he set them up in a heap in his right hand, then he would repeat the same game with his left. At last tired of this, or out of mere vacancy of mind, he rested his head on his old fur cap folded against the wall and gazed with his dark brown eyes into emptiness. What a depth of woe there was in that look! Those were eyes which it would not do for his mother to see; they would break her heart: weary eyes without any light in them, eyes in which hope was dead.

Why am I learning English, if I am never to be able to speak it? Why those stern, useless maxims—" I must not weep," " I must not complain "? And if the weeping still goes on inside me, and I still bemoan the world which I have lost, what help to me is the meaningless agony of work? The spirit of prison speaks to me from the innermost depths of my being. In desperation I snatch up the book with that saying of Epictetus: ". . . but my soul even Zeus himself cannot subdue." And full of loathing I throw it on the ground. It has lied to me.

* * *

The Embassy people, having heard that I have had to live on rice all this time, are now sending me good food. I have received a cloak also, but I still feel ill and perishing with the cold. And a different soldier, Sadi, has been put in charge of me, a dark, suspicious-looking fellow who holds aloof from me. Gradually the ice is being broken here; one or other of my fellow-prisoners will come and stand in front of my cell in order to throw envious glances at the plates on my table. How poor they all must be! They all have hungry eyes. I would like to give them some of my delicacies, but it would hurt me if they threw back the "unclean food." I must wait a bit longer. Some of them have already come to visit me, but shyly and in the protecting darkness. Sadi must have told them of my medicines, for they all want my help. Some of them have frightful diseases—diseases which one can only alleviate or prevent from getting worse. I now take up a regular evening practice. My patients slink away as silently as they come. Only the little Tadshik has as yet plucked up enough courage to give me a smile when he goes off. When I pass him during the daytime he turns to the others and talks twice as loud to his friends in order to show that he has nothing to do with the *Kafir*.

I now keep more to my cell. They have granted my request for a stove—the charcoal fire continued always to give me headaches. It would seem therefore that they count on my remaining on here. I seem to have no feeling against this; I am just weary beyond measure.

* * *

In the courtyard to-day I came across a well-dressed man with well-cut, clever features. The familiar water-jug in his left hand, he was on the way to the place where the Oriental allows the use of no paper, lest Allah's name—even if only in printed characters—should be besmirched. In spite of the all-too-significant tin jug, the stranger came towards me with

an air of dignity, as though he were bearing a gift to his King, and, as he passed, he greeted me with a gracious formality as though we were in the Royal audience chamber. His self-possession and distinction of manner, which prevented the situation from being painfully ridiculous, impressed me. When I had asked Sadi previously about this stranger, he had told me his name—that of a Governor well known here; and when I proceeded to ask what he had done, the answer was "Nothing." That is his stereotyped answer when I ask him about the misdemeanour of my fellow-prisoners—when he condescends to give any answer at all. And if I ask any of the prisoners themselves what crime this one or that has committed, they all give me the same quietly positive answer, "Nothing." I can scarcely believe that the Afghan Government is keeping over 200 men imprisoned for "nothing," but I must give my admiration to the pride of these men who all lie quietly so as not to "give away" their compatriots.

* * *

A violent fever kept me awake till morning. The night was not black but grey like some foul scum and streaked with reddish-brown like drying blood; it was painted for me in the colour of my misery. I lay sleepless and helpless and yet full of undreamt-of harmonies. I must set to and compose a Mass. The deeper we are dragged into the mud by realities, the stronger is the urge to higher things. When realities give us no room to expand, we must seek the most abstract of all realms, the world wherein we are no longer earth-bound—music. That must be the loftiest Mass that is written in the slough of despond.

* * *

I have just read over again the beginning of the Mass. It is good.—It was night-time again, the final inspection was

long past, and I had stretched myself on the wooden bed, while the soldier lay on the floor.—Suddenly sounds began to well up within me, around me, I scarcely knew what. I let the music flow and then went through it in my mind. I got up quietly, ruled lines on a couple of sheets of paper and wrote out the Kyrie. Merciless march the basses, harsh and foreboding. The chorus cry out for redemption, praying rather than singing. Louder and louder they cry in a crescendo of passionate discords. But they cannot draw the basses with them. On and on march the basses in a stern, remote rhythm, foreboding, pitiless. It crushes me. I am desperate. Where shall I find the answer—how reconcile my fate and my life, how escape annihilation ?

* * *

*Credo !* Yes, I believe ! And a liberating force streams from the soaring, victorious melody of the hours. Now the Resurrexit begins, at first in a mysterious whisper, announced by a single voice, wondering, half-unbelieving, but gradually taken up by the other voices with increasing certainty.—And joy swells up within me,—faith, faith in better things, an exulting fughetto—*credo !*

I walked across the room, stumbling over the guard who lay sleeping on rugs in front of the door ; I gazed out at the stars. I breathed in the freedom of endless space after having for days been enclosed in a narrow cell. I wanted to go out on the terrace to work off my excitement by movement, but a soldier put a bayonet to my breast : " Back ! "

In the darkness of my cell they rose again before me, the drooping, driven figures, their eyes turned timidly upwards, stammering rather than speaking, though speaking rather than singing : *Miserere Nobis !*

And I saw the *peccata mundi*—man's misery through man.

* * *

This afternoon I was lying half awake. The question was once more burning in my brain—when will they fetch me?—Suddenly I heard a firm step—there was a knock at the door, light streamed in, and a friendly figure was bending over me—a European, a German. It was Dr. von Platen, who is in the Afghan service here. "I bring you greetings from the German Embassy," he said, "and I want you to tell me whether my statement of your defence is correct. Things are not going so badly, we are working for you untiringly. The Afghans now promise us an open trial, the right to appeal, and eventually an appeal for mercy. You must keep your nerves in good order. It is possible that the death sentence may be passed, but it would certainly not be carried out. So have patience!"

Like breakers on the seashore, waves of hope rolled in on me, one after another.

Just then I was summoned before the Commandant.

Late in the night I was called up for drastic interrogation. The questions were written first in Persian, then in English translation. Then I had to write down my answers, which had to be translated. Then came an endless succession of more questions.

I interjected a counter-question: "What do you really want of me? Do you really believe that I wanted to rob a road-thief?"—"That is for the court to decide. First of all you need witnesses to attest your statement on oath."

"But I was alone when the man attacked me."

"No, you are wrong. The other side have twenty witnesses, friends of the dead man, who are able to attest the accuracy of his statements."

"Where are all these people supposed to have been?"

"Quite near."

"Then why did they not go to the help of their friend while I was trying to rob him?"

"That is for the court to decide"——

And they went on questioning about irrelevant matters. Things look bad again. I see to-day that a great number of people are working for my death.

* * *

That kind von Platen came again. He brought me important information regarding the way in which my case has been dealt with. It seems that my imprisonment is really illegal, as according to Afghan law murder, of which I am accused, can be punished only if it is made the subject of a formal accusation.

And my accusers have not spontaneously made any such accusation. Rather the wounded man had been sought out by the officials so that such an accusation might be forthcoming. In these circumstances naturally he could not tell the truth—namely, that he had tried to shoot me and had damaged himself instead of me. So he had been obliged to invent a fairy-tale.

I questioned von Platen as to why the Afghans were enacting this comedy, which would be laughed at by the whole world and would be believed by nobody.—" Why ? Because they are masters at making financial and political capital when they have a pawn in their hands. The worse your case can be made to look, the higher price they can put upon your life. And that is why I don't believe the worst can happen to you. The Afghans are clever enough to know that they cannot ask anything for your corpse. Your life has become a commodity, and for commodities payments have to be made."

* * *

For two weeks past I have made no entry in my Diary. Chiefly because I have been ill, and feeling stupid and indifferent to everything. I have sat idle in my cell, sunk in my misery, a prey to absolute apathy. The idea of the end, which at first so troubled me, does not now seem to be the

worst. Is it not better to die early than to go forward slowly towards one's internal demoralization ?—I have felt no energy for work. It seems senseless to study when I shall never have occasion to use and spread my knowledge.

I have had some talks with the Governor. He is all form, all dignity, all pride. He is undeniably clever, but he uses his cold-blooded cleverness only to keep up appearances. Whatever line his conversation may take, his one aim is to safeguard the prestige of his country and his own. Afghanistan has to be proved to be a land without reproach and he himself a distinguished diplomatist who happens to be dallying awhile in these unpleasant precincts.

And the others ? The Governor can at least speak foreign languages so well that I can talk fluently with him. The others, who now at last have reconciled themselves to converse with me, expect me to give my ideas in current coin, and as I don't understand them any better than they understand me our communications amount to a very restricted and worn-out mintage. And I have to keep my thoughts on a very low level if they are to have some sort of inkling of what I have in my mind. Even so, I am apt to be misunderstood, for they are always on the look-out for the *arrière-pensée* behind every word.—For instance, I was talking to little Hesareh, who was squatting beside me while I watched the flight of the hawks. Oh, those hawks I used to watch in Armenia, how freely they flew and how free was the eye that followed them in their flight ! Here in my cell I can see only a section of the heavens from between the walls, but it is a delightful pastime to watch the movements of the hawks—to see how they stop suddenly, hover motionless in the air, then suddenly pounce down upon their prey with little, hoarse cries. " Do you want to learn to fly by watching those birds ? " little Hesareh asked curiously, as he watched me. " Oh, no," I answered, " for in my country men have been flying for a long time past and further than those birds."—" Yes, I have seen them, those country-

men of yours, and I have heard the clatter of their birds up in the sky."—" Ah, you mean the machines—they have come to these parts; but at home they have long been able to fly without a motor—they fly with wings and steer with tails like these hawks!"—" Oh!" The little man sprang nervously to his feet and ran away. At noon I saw him talking with the warders, and since that evening two extra warders have been walking up and down on the roof. But they have no need to worry; all aspirations towards flight have long been dead in me.

I am again being plagued with headaches. This time, however, I refuse to give way to them. My state of mental misery intensifies every slightest physical ailment into an illness. To-day I must pull myself together. Perhaps Kant was not so far from the truth in what he said about the power of a cheerful disposition—not so far from the truth as all the shallow optimism which has suddenly begun to disgust me in my books.

* * *

In order to distract my mind from depressing thoughts, I have been exerting myself to try and work out the Binomial Theorem, but efforts at study come even harder on me as a grown man than they did on me as a boy. My loneliness and the unceasing burden of my fears have benumbed my thoughts —which have so long been concentrated on the question: " Shall I continue to live?"—A cry in the courtyard startled me. The slightest thing frightens a prisoner whose mind is continually on the alert for some nameless terror. I rushed down. They were dragging out of the stream a man who was resisting with the strength of madness all the hands stretched out to save him. He had been trying to drown himself. Slowly the frenzied man calmed down. As he sat on the ground, his clothes dripping and his hair untidy, I could see his features. It was the Dervish whom they had

A PRISONER FROM KOHISTAN

AFGHAN PRISONERS FROM GHAZNI

brought in a short time before, a wild type, from whose emaciated countenance the eyes gleamed forth full of fanaticism. He had always discharged vicious, unintelligible curses at me when I had come across him at prayer. He now sat under a small tree beneath the arid, stripped branches which are the only living things in the courtyard, a weeping, broken man. It is often said of Islam that it has no knowledge of suicide; but this fanatical believer whom they have saved to-day will try again to-morrow to drown himself in the knee-deep water of the stream during the prayer ablutions.

And so well do I understand the despair of this man, who thinks of me as the Unclean, that I should like to go up to him under the poor tree and place my hand upon his shoulder now shaking with sobs and say to him: "Brother, I would have let you indulge in your desire. Die free, while you have the time!" For that is the only possible way out that I can see: to die honourably by one's own hand. But how?

* * *

I hear that an Afghan advocate has been assigned to me: who will dare to defend an Unbeliever? Headache and fever have agonized me all day and throughout the endless night. The German doctor gave me quinine. It will do me no good, for no medicine can assuage my malady. . . . However, visiting-day dragged me out of my dull despair. To be able to speak, to hear kind words, what an unending boon! And they have brought me a couple of books, too. To-morrow I shall work.

* * *

The Governor is now at my urgent entreaty trying to make me acquainted with the language of the country. But he is always glad to digress, perhaps because it is a bother to him when this new pastime involves some trouble, perhaps also because this brings me into closer contact with the others.

They are able, prattling away like children, to let out things that soil the picture of Afghanistan which he has contrived in his endlessly clever way to paint for me! To-day, while he and I were walking across the courtyard, the handsome twelve-year-old boy was lying on the ground asleep as usual. I ventured on this occasion to ask the Governor how it was that a blameless child such as this should be kept in prison—it was incredible, I said, that he could have been guilty of any serious crime. The Governor wrinkled his brow: "A quite dangerous criminal, that boy!" he replied. "Just think of it, he killed an ass, a man and a dog with one shot!"

Is the prestige of the country worth such stupid lies, my distinguished friend? Or do you yourself really believe this absurd falsehood which my soldier guard had already dished up for me? Perhaps they all tell the story so often that they all come to believe it. Some reason has to be invented to explain why the boy is kept here. . . .

* * *

It is a great satisfaction to me that I am able to use my money as I like. At first I gave away bread, but when I saw how even those whose hunger could be seen in their eyes had to fight hard with themselves before they could take things to eat from the hands of the Unbeliever, I gave it up. This was not a very delicate method of winning the sympathies of my fellow-prisoners. Now I have made Chiamudin, my new soldier guard, my almoner. Chiamudin, it is true, is extremely stupid but—by the Prophet!—he does not lie or steal half as much as his predecessor, and he takes his missions tremendously in earnest. To-day I gave him a couple of rupees and asked him to give them to the poorest prisoners and said he should do the same for me every morning. He went and did not come back until some time afterwards, with his head bent, and looking as conscience-stricken as a poor dog that has misbehaved. His dirty fist was still clasping

the rupees, which he now held out to me, saying: "Here is your money, sir; I have not found the poor people." And in response to my look of surprise, he added apologetically: "We are all so poor!"—"Then," I said, "give it to those who are suffering from hunger." Chiamudin's wrinkling forehead showed with what desperate energy his mind was at work, but he stood in front of me without speaking. "Do you mean that the money does not go far enough?" I asked. He nodded, with a look of relief. "Well then, how much would you need, Chiamudin, to prevent anyone from going hungry to-day?" Quite six times he raised his ten dirty fingers to the winter sky. "They are all hungry, sir!" he faltered.

* * *

Work ought to distract me but does so no longer; I am weary and cheerless. There is a heavy darkness lying on my soul; only once in the day does a beam of light cross my path—that is the beautiful hour which Mirh Mohmad gives me before the evening prayer. Who is Mirh Mohmad? A rich Afghan, not in the public service, who is here either on account of his political opinions or as a hostage—I really do not know. But this I do know; Mirh Mohmad is my friend, and his friendship affords me such deep happiness that for the first time during my imprisonment I begin to love my life again; for there is something in it now that makes it worth while. Mirh Mohmad comes to me every evening for the hour before the time of prayer, sits opposite me at my table and smiles at me silently. There is not only goodness in that smile but also a wisdom which ennobles his features. I am convinced that Mirh is exceptionally good-hearted and wise, although, since the first halting words we exchanged, we have never been able really to converse, for he speaks an Afghan dialect which is quite unintelligible to me. Yet I do not care for the Governor, in his bland way, to interpret

mere meaningless talk between us. It is enough that Mirh sits with me every day with that lovable smile of his; then, when the Mullah calls the faithful to prayer, my visitor gives me a little nod of farewell and kneels down devoutly among the others on the terrace. But the radiance of his smile continues to illumine my cell.—For three days past now I have a friend. Once more I have something to thank the Fates for.

* * *

One more visiting day has come and gone. The first to arrive was as usual von Platen, who is called here "the Iron Visitor." His out-and-out admirable character makes his visits a real delight to me always. He began naturally by talking about "the case." During the next few days the trial is to begin—it will be the first trial ever held in public in Afghanistan. I have already signed the document containing my request for the holding of the trial. A gentleman from the German Embassy brought me some German papers and gave me an account of the untiring efforts of the Embassy on my behalf. Moreover he told me that my fears lest I should have done injury to my compatriots here have been proved baseless by direct evidence to the contrary. The Germans in Afghan service are being treated with special friendliness just now; their salaries have even been considerably increased. The only person who has suffered much is that very kind Professor Beck through having devoted himself to my interests in so self-sacrificing a way.

At early dawn to-day I heard again the fine clear tenor voice calling the faithful to prayer. Between sleeping and waking I tried to listen to him carefully; I was distinctly conscious of the effort. Then, however, I began to hear not a waking-song but a dream-song, something undefinable, a rhythmical, monotonous drone, which, however, in my dream I held to be a melody. Now I awoke and again I heard

the Mullah singing as usual—he had nearly finished. His song ran thus :

The melody moves in a compass of five notes. It is typically Afghan with a floating, airy movement in spite of the long call-notes.

My gifts of food to the people here and my medical ministrations are certainly making them feel more confidence in me. Even the Malik, who since his death sentence looks at nobody, allowed me to-day to photograph him with the camera which I smuggled in here ; he uttered no word indeed, but signified his consent with a lordly nod. While sitting thus motionless in the sun all the live-long day, is he thinking of the terrible moment when the soldiers will load their guns ? Is he thinking of the joys of Paradise, which he doubtless hopes to experience ? His outward aspect is inscrutable, but he seems to have a festive peacefulness within him which I envy. The Governor has said a clever thing on the subject : " The value of every life is in the aim which its owner sets himself. What aim do you think the Malik set himself ? Wealth, women and boys. Does he lose these through death ? No, on the contrary, according to his belief, Paradise will give him these things in greater quantity. Why, therefore, should he shrink from death ?— He knows that his crime of High Treason has earned him his

death sentence." As usual, the Governor ended up on his official note. But I wanted to know more. "So, in your opinion, death is no punishment for these poor wretches?"—"At all events, it is not an adequate punishment. Formerly criminals were tied up at the mouth of the cannon and their souls blown to pieces and that was quite right. For according to Afghan belief a soul that has been shattered into pieces cannot find its way to Paradise."—"But apart from the method of execution and the belief in a future life, have the condemned men no fear of death?"—"Fear? My dear Doctor, why should these people be wanting in that which is common to all life—to the animals as well as ourselves—but let's leave all that!"

The life of the prison went its way undisturbed by the case of the Malik, sitting there and awaiting his death. Two road-bandits sat patching their clothes and laughing together. They have grounds for hope, and even those who have no grounds go on hoping. The prison rule is mild; over and above the privilege of mixing together, the prisoners are allowed to have visits from their wives in the room near the gate. The couple are left alone for a while, until the next couple begin to knock impatiently at the door. Many prisoners, it is true, have their wives sent away without seeing them, as these visits are not considered dignified.

* * *

At last I have had a visit from the Afghan advocate who has been allotted to me. I cannot bring myself to feel any trust in him. It seems to me that they are using him as a means of communication to find out what steps we are planning. I dare not decline his services, however, for I fear that, cabined up as I am here, I cannot see my affairs in perspective.—And yet how can I possibly trust this advocate, Dost Mohammed? He put before me a very singular suggestion—namely, that I should state before the Court that I

had acted while in a drunken condition—that owing to the rarefied mountain air I had been obliged to take some alcohol and that in consequence of this I was not really conscious of what happened ! I cannot believe that drunkenness in a land which prohibits alcohol in the sternest possible way could serve as an extenuating circumstance. I opposed the suggestion with the utmost decision, although Dr. J., my helpful interpreter, strongly recommended me to let Dost have his way. But that would be to give the Afghans just the kind of shibboleth they want—" Drunken Germans hunting down Afghans ! "

Late in the night I walked up and down restlessly. A fierce indignation came over me at the thought of having to put up with these hurts and indignities. Vermin and stinks spoilt my sleep. Outside, guards were already calling the second hour of the night :

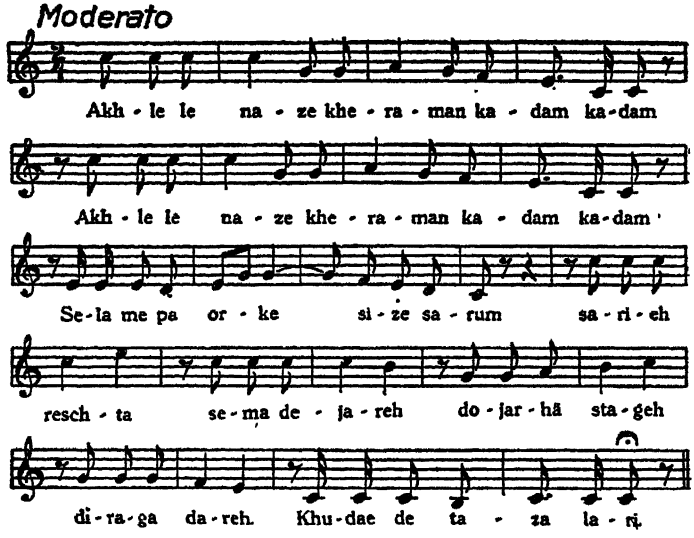
It is always the same, repeated over and over again a hundred times. I try to discover some variation, but no, it is always the same. If I were to go out and ask him to stop he would laugh. And if I were to tell the Governor about it he would ask me with astonishment : " But how can that disturb you ? Why, it helps one to go to sleep ! "

* * *

The time passes with painful slowness and with it proceeds within me inexorably the demoralization at which I look on with detachment, as though it were all happening to someone else. Such is imprisonment—the rack for us of to-day.

Even my talks with Mirh Mohmad—for we are now able to converse slowly in words—do not take me out of my wretchedness. He is wise, beyond questioning, but his

wisdom's highest aim is to bear suffering peacefully. "God sent me hither, God will know what He wants from me. Patience! Do you also have patience!" But this is just what I cannot have. I stand up against my fate, I fight against it and sink down after every useless battle into hopeless apathy.—I find some pleasure now, however, in making a collection of Afghan folk-songs. There was, for instance, "*akhle le naze*," which I made Mirza sing to me. Quite hard in its pure tone, and triumphantly clear. After I had written out the music, the Governor put the Afghan words for me underneath. He refused to give me a translation, however. "Be content to know that it is a love-song," he said; "the details into which the text goes can certainly not be given in English." The song goes thus:


Moderato
Akh - le le na - ze khe - ra - man ka - dam ka-dam
Akh - le le na - ze khe - ra - man ka - dam ka-dam
Se-la me pa or - ke si - ze sa - rum sa - ri - eh
resch - ta se - ma de - ja - reh do - jar - hă sta - geh
di - ra - ga da - reh. Khu-dae de ta - za la - ri.

Great delight was caused by my writing out the Afghan songs. Two hundred grown-up children now began to make themselves important whenever they saw me. Wherever I went they began to sing with challenging glances. My task

as collector became daily more difficult, the number of songs grew so great. The songs had no melody in our sense of the word; often the time would change and it became impossible to follow the rhythm. If I asked a singer to repeat a strophe, he would calmly sing me something entirely different. Presently I discovered that when their repertory of songs became exhausted they began to extemporise the most senseless stuff just out of anxiety to shine. The Governor, naturally, would not admit this to me, when I complained to him about it. "Afghanistan," he declared, "is so rich in musical forms and laws, that you can give every single strophe in ten different variations without repetition."

There are two quite different kinds of Afghan songs in my collection. The one consists of Indian songs, the musical sense of which is quite unintelligible to us because of its unfamiliar scales; my songs are mostly in the minor key and built on the Doric scale. They all sound to our ears like whining, with their grace-notes and Doric passages, which are sung quickly and also with grace-notes, only holding on longer to one particular note.

The second kind is quite different. Those which seem familiar to our ears are again divided into two classes. One class—"*akhle le naze*," being a typical example of these—resembles our *lieder;* it is cleverly set, has a middle part, and a characteristic ending, often unrelated to what has gone before. Songs of this kind exist in great numbers. The cultured Afghan has two songs for every hour of the day, one of which represents the mind of a man and the other that of a woman. The specific difference between the two types I could not establish—it is possible that I was deceived in the matter! The second sub-species is a simply phrased folk-song which scarcely exceeds the compass of a fifth but is more elaborate in form. The major and minor keys alternate bar by bar, and I have often marvelled at the accuracy with which the Afghans strike the unexpected semitones.

It is difficult to draw distinct conclusions. It seemed to me significant, however, that the Afghans should have a music corresponding with ours; in this, so far as I know, they stand alone among the races of Asia. The Indian influence is manifest. Is it possible that in the matter of the *kunstlied* Greek influence has been at work? These features cannot be Persian, for Persian music also sounds strange to us. The simple folk-songs in any case seem from their originality to be songs sung by the shepherds of the mountain races.

* * *

Von Platen was here. He told me that I should be interrogated to-day at 11 o'clock. The crisis? I seem to scent the morning breath of freedom! What happiness!

A prey to unrest, I kept walking up and down on the terrace. A raven, black as anthracite and with a red beak, was perched upon the wall. He presented a queer appearance seen in profile; his enormous beak prevented him from looking straight in front of him. When the ravens return of an evening from the west, they fly in flocks over the prison or they swing themselves high up in the air and sport about croaking, swerving about in a wide sweep. I stood up on a chair and I got quite a different world before my eyes, with a wider horizon. I am to be out there to-day—I am all nerves.

It is already noon, and I am still waiting for them to come and take me out. I sat watching my fellow-prisoners here, how they washed themselves squatting down, how they cleaned their teeth with little bits of wood, and how they smoked away at their *Tshelim*, their water-pipes; smoking is forbidden here, but the good prison-overseer willingly closes one eye—and both eyes, indeed, when prisoners ingratiate themselves with hard cash. These *Tshelims* are set up in elaborate fashion. An attendant takes a handful of tobacco, moistens it and kneads it in. After he has put

charcoal on it he blows the smoke by lifting the lid of the pipe, and breathes as though whistling through the tube; only at this point does one begin to smoke. He inhales until his lungs are full and then has had enough of it.

* * *

Night-time. My waiting was in vain. I went to see the Governor. "Can you tell me why I was not taken out?" He shook his head reflectively and went on sipping his sweet green tea until his cup was empty. Then he said: "I have heard, my dear Doctor, that your affair has taken a turn for the worse again."—"From whom have you heard that?"—"I have my friends and I am interested in what concerns you."—"And what is the matter with my case?"—"Well, you see," he said smilingly, "you are in Afghanistan, you must not forget that. You have become unluckily an important item in the political game played by the Powers. In your case it is not a question of guilty or not guilty, free or not free—what really matters is the satisfying of the English, the Russians, the Italians, the French, the Afghan Reform Party and the Afghan Conservative Party. Believe me, it is not an easy matter to decide your case in accordance with the dignity and rights of our land and at the same time in accordance with our responsibilities to other countries."

* * *

It was shortly after 8 o'clock on the 20th February that I received my summons to the Court. Von Platen came and explained to me with some perturbation that the hearing of the case was to come on to-day. He added that I must hold unconditionally by my first deposition.

Towards ten I was taken out by an officer and led into the streets. A half company of police marched along beside me with fixed bayonets; some of my fellow-prisoners were

also taken out and put into line. My request for a carriage was refused; the populace must have its spectacle.

In the courtyard of the Law Courts, a large garden with trees in it, a crowd was assembling. It gazed its full at me as long as I was kept waiting. Presently I was called indoors. In a spacious, cross-shaped room the Judges' table was in a central position. Sitting at it were three Mullahs with white turbans and long black beards; one of them, I noted, wore sleeve-links. To the left sat representatives of the German colony and the Embassy, to the right representatives of other Embassies, Russian, French, English, Turkish, etc. I bowed respectfully first towards the left, then to the Judges, then towards the right. The air was icily cold and I was feeling disturbed and alarmed. I had been told that I should be brought before a single Judge and now I found myself confronted with a great Court of Judges. In the meantime a number of strange-looking Afghans were entering the room—ah, the "witnesses!" The bitterly cold atmosphere, the apathetic eyes, everything served to remind me of what the Governor had said. Yet I vowed I would show courage: the prisoner receives a one-sided judgment, because it depends on the chance of his making a good impression. Like a drowning man, one clings to the judgments of others when one knows that one can no longer judge for oneself with the usual breadth of view.

So I sat there torn between hopes and fears. Would the proceedings to-day come to a good conclusion or——? And I reflected how it would be if I were to depend for my verdict on that wild-looking, bronzed Afghan with his scarred face whose wild eyes always avoided mine.

Now the Mullah in the centre, a soft Indo-Persian mixed type, began to deliver a speech; it was endlessly long. It disturbed me not to be able to follow it; an Afghan translated the substance of it for me: namely, that as we were all descended from Adam and Eve, I must not imagine that

Europeans would be treated differently from an Afghan. I replied that I hoped so, and that Afghans would also be given justice in Germany. Then something interminable was read aloud. It turned out to be the depositions which had been made by both parties. The Judge interposed several times with questions: why I had got off the cycle or must not the pistol have been fired in the air if it lay behind the Afghan's back? I gave an ocular demonstration of the whole incident, with my Afghan interpreter as my assailant and a stick as the gun. Naturally I confirmed my original deposition, that in the course of the hand-to-hand struggle the pistol went off through the action of my assailant.

After a pause the sitting was resumed at 2 o'clock with a long speech. I was now asked whether I would be willing to come to an understanding with the other side upon a friendly basis: I replied that I had no cause to be nervous about the judicial method of procedure but that in the interest of Germany's friendly relations with Afghanistan I should be ready to come to terms with the man's heirs as speedily as possible. Then, on behalf of the other side, rose a wizened-looking little old man with a white beard like a goat's. His hands folded over his stomach, he declared that he wanted a trial. This meant that the other side would not be willing to accept a sum of money in reparation; what they wanted rather was that I should be handed over to them unconditionally so that they might wreak their vengeance on me—this would mean that they would be able to dictate the method of my execution. In my own mind I had always had a glimmer of hope that some reasonable solution might be arrived at through an amicable settlement. Now, that was knocked on the head. Was it not this the Governor was thinking of when he said my affair had taken a turn for the worse? Previously he had said that the other side would be delighted to accept some money and to give me their forgiveness in return, which would have the effect of eliminating the direct danger of my death.

Now a different decision had been come to. But why? The explanation was not to be discovered. In the labyrinth of Afghanistan politics a European has difficulty in finding his way—a prisoner is lost.—While these thoughts passed through my mind, the little old man had got on his feet again and he was now reading a form of accusation against me. It was a long, unintelligible rigmarole. It began by naming the deceased Afghan.

" Din Muhammed, son of Fejz Muhammed, son of Jahja Khan, resident in Qala-je Adam Khan, a freeman by birth, a Muslim," etc, etc., " who harboured the idea of assassination against nobody."[1] " Dr. Sauer, son of Domitius Stratil," it went on, " has admitted the following facts " :

" On Tuesday, the 25th of Agrab, 1304 (17 Nov. 1915) when the accused Doctor was proceeding by Mar-sang on his motor-cycle and the deceased Din Muhammed was riding on his horse, the horse of the said deceased shied at the motor-cycle and reared. Although he (Din Muhammed) called to him (Dr. Sauer) : ' Stop so that I can get into a corner,' he did not stop. Arrived at the district of Sang-qala-dur, the horse threw the deceased, Din Muhammed . . . The accused, here represented, the above-named Dr. Sauer, saw the dead man that he could not defend himself (and he said to himself . . .) ' He must therefore not live in order to take legal proceedings against me.' The accused, here represented, deliberately and unjustifiably shot the said deceased with a shot from a German pistol in the back of the said deceased in the region of the shoulder and wounded him so that the blood poured from the wound, so that the bullet of the pistol of the accused, here represented, remained stuck in the soul of the said deceased, so that the deceased was for nine days confined to his bed. Finally, the said deceased was killed in the night of Thursday after nine days by the shot of the pistol of the above named Dr. Sauer, because it was deadly ; as also the wounding of the said deceased was known to the Doctor and is mentioned in his preliminary interrogation.

[1] Here and elsewhere the copy of the document which I obtained later had gaps. I remember that there were references in Court to remarks which I was supposed to have exchanged with the Afghan in Pushtu !

The shot from the pistol bullet sufficed for the annihilation of the life of the said deceased. The boundaries of the site of the murder are in the district of Sang-gala-dur between the open road in Islamic land, in the East, in the North, in the West and in the South on the open unpossessed waste."

There is an incident in the course of the sitting. My Afghan advocate, Dost Mohammed, is making a speech; I am told that he is explaining that I acted in self-defence and fired the shot without premeditation, and that self-defence according to Afghan law is not a punishable matter. I am alarmed to hear of these statements; so my mistrust of the man had not been unfounded! It is perfectly clear to me now that if he alleges self-defence I am lost, for in the event of this defence being made two eye-witnesses must by Afghan law be produced and these I have not got. I am reminded of the Governor's last words to me—given out in tones marked by unwonted feeling—before I started, "The great thing is that you stick by your wise first deposition." And I bethink me of von Platen's sensible words also: "No 'self-defence,' as we have no witnesses! As we could not produce the witnesses, the so-called 'Oath of Conviction' would be called for from the other side: that would mean that these must declare upon oath to the best of their belief and knowledge whether you shot the man deliberately or by misadventure. And what the other side would swear to goes without saying." —All this rushed to my brain with the result that I sprang to my feet excitedly, interrupted Dost Mohammed, and declared that my deposition was to be adhered to and that the advocate's plea must be disregarded. "I myself," I went on, "have said from the beginning that the deceased was responsible for the shot being fired, and to this deposition I adhere."

The Judges smile. A conflict between the accused and his advocate! As heads are being shaken at me also from the German side of the Court-room, I go on to point out that

no opportunity has been given me to instruct my advocate, and that therefore I must urgently request that—as is the custom all over the world—I should be confronted with the statement of accusation, as down to the present I scarcely know what I am charged with.—But the Court refuses and orders an adjournment.

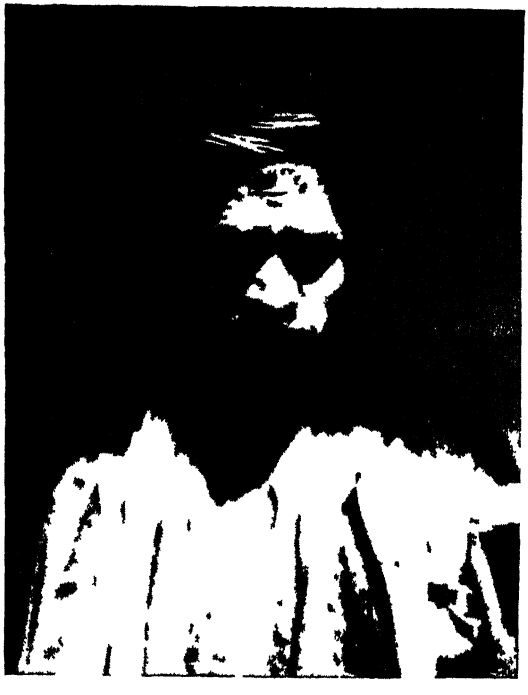
The sitting breaks up. My friends come up to me and remonstrate with me for interrupting Dost. Not until I got back to my cell did I come back to the belief that I had done well. There sat my dear friend, looking straight into my eyes. Naturally he knew all that had happened. " If you had not acted so to-day," he said, " things would have been very bad indeed." How right he was I came to realize later.

* * *

Strong remonstrances continued to be made to me for having discredited Dost. The other side are reported to have admitted that the dead man went up to me with the gun in his hand ; and to act in self-defence, people persist in saying, is not a punishable matter. They maintain, therefore, that Dost was merely wanting to turn the other side's admission to good account. My answer is that I had not known this either during the sitting or before, and I promised penitently to allow Dost to speak alone in future. I promised that I should not even answer direct questions except indirectly through him.

When saying good-bye, von Platen remarked : " As an appeal is promised us, we can hold our hand to see what the Afghans really are after. Should things go really ill, we must fight with all the means at our disposal. But we had better first see whether they themselves are not going to see to it that the comedy may lead to a reasonable conclusion."— " Good, we shall try to do that." But it is a bad look-out when one has to make experiments with one's own life.

* * *



CHIAMUDIN MY GUARD

To-day again I was taken before the Court. At the head of some dozen highway robbers I marched along between the soldiers. Mouths agape, the populace stared silently at the procession ; some turned away their eyes as though ashamed when they met my gaze ; others laughed mockingly. But one can forgive everything to the land when one looks at the mountains. Now the blinding white which has crowned the heights is lying deep upon the slopes below. All these peaks and ridges which seemed as though hanging in mid-air when seen from within the prison are now on firm ground and I am able to understand them better. But they remain distant—unattainably distant.

The people crowd into the courtyard of the Vilayet as though a festival were on. Once again I am stared at wonderingly or curiously, anxiously or mockingly. When anger rises within me, I turn my eyes towards the great mountains in the distance to get some of their peace into my heart.

In the Judges' Court, Dost is displaying all his faculties brilliantly. In order to make up for the incident of the last sitting, I ask him on this occasion to make the most of the admission of the other side. " What admission ? " asks Dost.—" Why, that the deceased came towards me with his gun in his hand," I reply. Upon which Dost declares that they have done nothing of the kind ! I am dumbfounded. A nod from von Platen helps to reassure me. But my mistrust of Dost was well grounded after all, and now I have bound myself by a promise. Silent and worried, I listen to the proceedings. There is much speech-making, there is much reading aloud and much note-taking, a lot of formalities are gone through, so that ten minutes pass before a new sentence can be spoken. Despite the length of the sitting nothing substantial has been done. To me the whole thing looks very dark.

I was Mirh's guest just now. Pilaff was the dish. The table would have bent beneath the weight of all the rice—

had it not been served on the ground! Afterwards we played chess. I had first to accustom myself to the various differences that mark the Persian form of the game. The King stands opposite the enemy Queen; there are no Castles; and the Pawns can move only one place at a time even at the start. But even if I had succeeded in mastering these little peculiarities I should still have lost the game to my clever playfellow

* * *

I often come into touch now with the Colonel. He is a splendid specimen of the Afghan and belongs to the family of Mohmed Sei, of the Durani lineage, which to-day ranks as the most distinguished in the land, as the Shah also belongs to it.

Until recently the Governor has managed to keep the Colonel and me apart, but now, there having been a quarrel between them, the Colonel and I exchange visits frequently. By reason of his rare honesty and his eagerness to learn he has become daily more to my liking. Whenever he has told me things about Afghanistan, he asks me questions about Europe and displays his keen interest in all forms of European learning, writing down my answers in a little notebook and reading them over in his cell afterwards and reflecting upon them. We have been making special efforts to impart to each other our knowledge of different languages, and I have daily been astonished how quickly and easily he has been mastering English, which is new to him.

* * *

More afternoons in the Vilayet, more hearings, more misery and depression, and still no progress. And again on my way back the white mountains.

The Colonel and Mirh have comforted me; the King, they say, would prevent a sentence of death at all costs.—

"Well, but will they set me free when the trial is concluded?" To this question they had no reply to give; they did not want to hurt me. So there may be another two years for me either here or in the prison at Shaipur. I must try and accustom myself to this prospect—and yet I can't. Am I not almost dead spiritually already? And how would it be if after these years the gate to freedom were opened for a man who is too old to make use of what is restored to him?

To remain sound in mind and to be able to make good what I have missed during my months here and what I may miss in the years possibly to come, I must work. There must be no more moaning and groaning, no more despairing: I must work only and not think. That is the only thing that can save me. I have drawn up a programme to which I will bind myself down:

7 o'clock. Get up, wash, do physical exercises, make meteorological notes.
8. Breakfast.
8.30—12. Russian.
12—1. Music.
1. Dinner.
1.30—3. Rest, study chess, visit friends, make meteorological notes.
3—6. English or Geographical studies.
6—7. Exercise.
7—8. Supper. Letters.
8—10. Reading and Diary. Meteorological notes.

Only special events, such as visits or sittings of the Court, shall be allowed to interrupt this programme. One more thing: I shall once again break myself of smoking. Things are with me as they were at Pontus: I must husband all my energies.

* * *

Dost has now got things to such a point as to muddle the whole case. Step by step he has made it turn more and more

on the point of self-defence. The Judge naturally has nothing to say in reply except to ask the stereotyped question: "Where are the witnesses who must be cited in accordance with the law?" And Dost is telling lies. I am becoming nervous, but people keep saying: "The great thing is to keep quiet. Don't irritate the Court. You are powerless."—Von Platen also has become disquieted, especially since the disaster of yesterday when Dost's whole edifice of lies tumbled to pieces and there was a great to-do in the Court. It was all a concerted game in which I am placed in a very bad position. The Afghans with wonderful cunning have arranged so to conduct the case that no Court in the world could now give me the verdict. The pitfalls were cleverly hidden. Now I am done for. I pull my cloak closely round me and think of the end. Things are as bad with me now as at the start. Indeed they are worse: at the start, before the trial began, it would have been against the law if I had been hanged. After this trial my execution would have a distinct look of justice about it.

* * *

A great joy in my misfortune was the visit paid me to-day by Professor Beck, the well-known Orientalist, who after a long experience of bad luck is now interpreter at the German Embassy. His kindness touched me. His concern for me is so intense that I am really troubled about him. The kind look in his eyes always does me good. He knows more than anyone else about Afghan affairs. To-day he admits the outlook is dark. All the comfort he could give me was: "Keep calm, however bad things are; keep calm, even if the verdict be against you; the worst is not likely to happen to you in any case."

The Colonel and my dear friend Mirh are also depressed over the last sitting. Although they have not so much insight into things as the Governor, they urge me strongly to

have nothing more to do with Dost. And yet after long deliberation I had to make up my mind to continue to accommodate myself to him; I cannot get a general survey of affairs from here.

* * *

I have stuck to my plan of work with clenched teeth and intense energy for five days now. I have even held to my vow about not smoking. But what is the good of it? Throughout it all I could think of nothing but death. That thought never leaves me.

Must I then die? I have such an immeasurable dread of it! In the war it was otherwise; there was rapture in that, for there was an idea behind it, one's life was a thing one was giving for something immeasurably higher. But here? Why and for what? All this is senseless and horrible.—There is no healing that heals me, no distraction that distracts me, no comfort that comforts me. I have only one feeling now: the fear of death. Who will dare to despise me for that—who that knows what death really means? In order to know what death means, one needs to have stood long on the very outermost boundary of life.

There have been heroic eras in which men knew what death was. My memory keeps going back now to some pages in the *Nibelungenlied* which captivated me while I was still a child, although they did not then accord with my ideas of heroism. What I loved was the description of the morning after the fight with the Bavarians: of the dawn breaking after the night of bloodshed, how the warriors, shivering from cold in the early morning gloom, allowed the blood and rain to dry on their armour. Yes, that was poetically and strongly and beautifully seen. That was a bit a boy could appreciate. But to-day it is another picture that I love. It is the evening when the rearguard hear in the great stillness the sound of the clattering of hooves of the

enemy's horses. First from afar, then nearer and nearer at hand. Each man knows that what is coming is death. And upon this the troubadour or knight or whoever is telling the tale makes the admission, poignant in its simplicity and truth to life, that " all the heroes " were seized with fear.

In the Burgundian era no lack of young heroes fell in the fray. Men knew death then. And the height of the Middle Ages which sang of those heroes knew it no less. But it was precisely because these men loved life and knew how to face death that their faces blanched at the thought of it; they knew death in its terrible, dreadful earnestness. And all of those who blanched died as heroes. If our poets of to-day love to meet death in a laughing spirit which mirrors the spirit of our time it is only because they do not hear the clattering hooves in the distance and that which they bring with it—the understanding which makes men turn pale.

Although I had put out all my strength "*von jener dunklen Höhle nicht zu beben*," yet I feel no shame over my fear. For my fear remains with me. Nor does that one thing remain for me which atones for the blanching face—a heroic death. Only a death.

* * *

Woe is me! I have already transgressed all my regulations. I am smoking again although I know that my agitated heart will now prevent me from sleeping at night; I did scarcely any work to-day—I sat wearily in front of my cell and shivered. It must be springtime out of doors. Since the morning when the Pändschiri after watching me at my physical exercises collected the whole prison together to come and see " how comically the German prayed," I have dropped them. Once when, to cheer myself up, I began to whistle, the soldier on guard took it into his head to whistle also, breaking in with the most senseless tunes—he wanted to show me that Afghans could do it too. At noon they carried off under a strong

guard that jolly little fellow from Bamian who used to enliven us : whether to Schëipur or to the place of execution I don't know.

The twelve-year-old boy sits outside on the terrace and weeps bitterly—perhaps someone has beaten him. The old Mullah is visiting the prison and is praying in front of every cell for the freeing of its occupier ; they say his intercession helps unfailingly. He has avoided my door like the Gate of Hell. How infinitely unimportant all that is to me ! I am apathetic and only want an end to everything.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME BAD DAYS—AND AT LAST, RELEASE!

"HARD 'tis to wander, so confusing the ways!"—I read that in *Li Tai Pe;* it is continually in my mind.

Yesterday something happened which confused me. I had stretched out my sleeping sack on the passage in front of my cell so that some of Chiamudin's vermin might take themselves off. In the evening when I was putting it back, a piece of grey paper fell out on the ground; it was folded up several times and when I opened it out I saw that it was covered with scrawling, clumsy handwriting only portions of which I could decipher. Who could it be that wanted to give me secret tidings? I questioned Chiamudin first as to whether anyone had been in my cell or out on the passage in front. "Yes, sahib," he answered, "the blind man sat for a long time here by the door. He had groped his way here after me after I had distributed your money, and remained sitting here; he kept kissing the rupees in his hand."—"Can the blind man write?"—Chiamudin gave me a look of bewilderment and shook his head in a way that suggested that he thought I must be mad. "Who else was here, Chiamudin?"—"I do not know, sahib. Has someone stolen some of your writing paper or some of your cakes? It was not I."

After this fruitless investigation I made another effort to decipher the document. Mirh, whom I met presently, translated for me as follows: "Beware of the Governor, he

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spies on you. Beware of Dost Mohammed, he is working for your downfall." Mirh shook his head, puzzled. "There are many mistakes in the writing," he said, "but who is there here who can write at all? And who that knows how to write knows anything about such matters? And who that knows about such things would venture to write to you about them in this dangerous way?"

Who can the writer have been? It can't be the Governor, in view of the warning against him. The Khazi, the only one of his friends who could possibly have formed an opinion regarding the trial, has been away for two days past. The Colonel? I went to him and asked him if he had written me a letter. He denied, astonished. I don't know what to make of it. It will be best if I destroy it and think no more about it. But a feeling of uncertainty remains behind. "So confusing the ways!"

* * *

At the sittings of the Court, von Platen seeks to save what there may be to save. He makes out that the Afghan, when falling from his horse, may have done himself some mortal injury and may not have died from my shot at all. Even if my bullet was the only thing that damaged him, the man had only to go to a surgeon in time as the wound was of a kind easily healed. So that he himself was really responsible for his own death. But there is nothing to be done. If we were to draw the attention of the Judge to the man's bad conscience and to lay stress on this, it would be retorted that my own conscience could not have been any better as I had taken to flight. And then comes the cardinal question: "Where are the witnesses who will swear that you acted in self-defence?" Dost is beginning to tell lies again. He is to bring forward witnesses to-morrow!

Now the Judge puts the alternative before us: "Do you

ask the other side to give their evidence as to your guilt on oath, or do you not? "

What is left for me to say? Both the women who are crouching near the wall at the back of the Court are already showing how happy they would be to take the oath. Should they do so, there is no longer any chance for me. However, the sitting is postponed.

* * *

To-day was my first hunger-day. I am fasting out of sympathy, for it is Ramadan again. Oh, you friends of Syrmene, you innocent sinners and most welcome visitors, how beautiful last Ramadan was! I was roaming about freely between the Pontus mountains and the sea. . . . I must not think about it!

As the asceticism of the fast is very good, I find, for the soul, and as I do not want to inflict the disturbing sight of dishes of food upon either my soldier guard or my fellow-prisoners, I am going hungry with them as far as I can. Towards noon to-day I must admit I succumbed to the temptation to eat some biscuits secretly and just at that moment Mirh looked in on me so unexpectedly that I had scarcely time to put away the plate with the tantalizing delicacies. " Take them out again," he exclaimed smilingly, " and eat them peacefully in my presence! "—" But would not the sight trouble you, as you have been fasting from such an early hour? "—He shook his head: " On the contrary," he replied, " when I look on at anybody eating, my sacrifice is the greater, and thus I am doubly perfect before Allah."—" You say that with such conviction! Do you then regard yourself as perfect before God? "—" Naturally, I am. Believe me, almost all Mohammedans in prison are so. One is able to keep the Commandments easily by a little sacrifice of time. And what should one do here but pray, with so much time at our disposal? "

Then we began to talk again about that story which has

called forth so much displeasure here in the prison: about the youth from Ghazni who, being in some great personal need, resolved in accordance with the usual custom, to seek help by giving utterance to a formula of prayer which should have special application to his case. In return for two cups of tea one visiting day he had obtained his formula from a friend well versed in the sacred writings and had learned it off by heart and begun with fervour to recite it a thousand times a day. He could not, indeed, understand the words, for the speech of Islam is Arabic, which only a few Afghans know. The youth had the scrap of paper with the wonder-working scrawls upon it as a precious secret; but it soon became known that his prayer ran: "Dear God, give me a lovely maiden with slender hips!"

Only some years ago the frivolous scribe would have been executed! It is, indeed, the only instance of mockery by a freethinker that I have met with in Afghanistan, but this jest is bad enough. I thought of the remark of a fellow-prisoner, one Gulwsha: "Our belief is no longer healthy!" I thought of that evening under the Vershambek when my Hafiz talked with shining eyes of his religion. And sighing, I left Mirh to go and take my night watch by the Khan from Kandahar. The Khan over-ate himself to-day after the cannon-shot had announced the close of the time of fasting. I wanted to recommend exercise for him, but the distinguished personage would have been too haughty to follow such a prescription. So I told him he must pray to-morrow for three hours. That will involve a good deal of exercise and he will do as I have told him. The Reciter of Prayers came to see me afterwards of his own accord and praised me and promised to remember me in his own prayers.

* * *

For weeks past my case has been at a standstill. Some people think that the sittings will not be resumed until after

the month of the fast is over. Others say that the postponement will be longer. In any case there is delay. The reasons for it are unknown to me. I have just to wait—to wait for the issue of the trial, in which there is nothing now to lose. This waiting is nothing but one long agonized terror, and yet I have to tell myself that it is happiness compared with what the future will bring.

* * *

When the sun sinks behind the serrated ridge of the mountain on which stands the fortress of Cabul, an almost sacred feeling seems to come over the people here which recalls to me that hour in my childhood on Christmas Eve when we awaited the bell which called us to the lit-up Christmas Tree and the giving out of the Christmas presents. Already little fires have been lit and the savoury odours of meats and of steaming rice are perceivable, the *Tshelim* is being placed in position and a glass of water placed alongside it. Before the rapid descent of dusk a cannon-shot rings out, and now, with the words " la ilaha illa 'llah," the Mullah announces the ending of the day of fast and all start eagerly to eat. So has it been every evening, and every evening I experience the pleasure of being approached by an Afghan who, by way of giving expression to his special regard, hands me a piece of flat cake which I proceed, in accordance with the custom, to devour at once before his eyes. The hunger which I share with them has won me so much sympathy that I no longer have a single enemy within these walls. New prisoners, indeed, display their scorn for me on their first day here but on the second they are already scanning me with wonder, and on the third they lay their hand on their breast to greet me silently. For I am not worthy of the spoken salaam: that can be offered only to Believers.

Mirh comes to me, strokes my hands, and says in his simple way: " You are good! " From all sides I receive

invitations to supper. The feeling of joyous peace which lies over everybody enters also into my heart.

To-morrow, indeed, one or two feuds will break out afresh, for the hunger-time of Ramadan exacerbates tempers when people live crowded together as much as they do here. At this present moment, however, the man whom to-day at noon they ducked in the stream sits laughing between his two tormentors, and the two Men of Mark, who in the daytime were at daggers drawn, are now smoking their *Tshelim* together. Ramadan must be the strongest bond in the whole organization of Islam. The ardour with which all these happy eaters will to-morrow once again carry out their fast is marvellous. And I too shall hunger with them once more for I believe I am hungering myself into health.

* * *

To-day I am feeling happy and care-free as I have never felt before during my imprisonment. What have I found that has gladdened me so profoundly? Only a scrap of knowledge which I have acquired.

I was working. Exercising my consciousness—acting, as it were, like a critical observer of myself—I was making a study of my own literary style.

Why is my style lacking in movement? Because it lacks verbs; for verbs are the only part of speech that can give expression to the dynamic. But why is it exactly that the language of us scientists is as poor in verbs as it is rich in substantives? Because it represents thought and because every thought is completely undynamic. What happens to it takes place in some obscure pigeon-hole of our mind in which our consciousness takes no part. The gift of an unfathomable, actionless conception—that is our intellect.

I shoved my work on one side and buried my head in my hands. Science, the work of the intellect, had seemed to me the only thing worth living for since the storms of

prison life had broken my belief in all other things of worth.

But is this really the right way in which to meet one's fate? Every individual life has its special solution, every individual destiny demands from life its own special answer. Here, where my life is hemmed in and endangered, no stupefying of my brain through scientific work can help; rather I must live intensively in order to make up for the missing part of my life and in order to overcome the external obstacles. Static thinking may help the prisoner to forget for the moment the demoralizing process in his soul—it cannot hold him up. There is only one way out of it. I must myself take my share in the dynamic force which moves the world; I must partake in the tension the force and the pulsating life. For only life can intensify life.

I went out into the courtyard. Behind the walls, the sun was already sinking, a shining ball in whose radiance the snow-capped mountain ridges were all aglow. How often had I gazed upon this sinking sun and those glowing ridges! Above our fears and above our hopes the sun rises and sets, eternally the same, in an endless see-saw between morning and evening, summer and winter—circling in cosmic rhythms which even the smallest works of creation faithfully reflect. And since the world in its ceaseless motion is forever revealing itself anew, since it bears along in its course the most trivial of existences, obedient to its mighty laws—what else could uphold it but a will which keeps all elements in motion, which guides the elements thus kept, and likewise reveals itself in everything from the stellar system to the tiniest of atoms? Volition—that is to say, the generation of life and motion; volition guides and sustains all the living elements of the cosmos in their myriad degrees of elaboration; and since I am alive, volition is in me as in all else.

Thus musing, I looked westward at the setting sun. Visions of the past rose vividly to my inward eye—the deadly bom-

bardment at Isonzo, ourselves sitting in the cavern and watching the rock crumble like sand: what had made us soldiers stick to our guns, and cling to life despite all the abominations? Volition—that was it. And then, again, when between sleeping and waking I listened to the song of the Mullah, till dreams blotted out the music, what was it that persisted through my sleep, when everything else had faded away? Volition—again volition. Now I knew what it was that had excited me, urged me on, stimulated me more and more on every occasion—volition, nothing else. Now I have my hand upon the Archimedean lever, by whose means I can give fresh impulse to my grief-stricken conception of the universe. Now I need never again shut my eyes to actuality, while striving to submerge myself in the abstract sphere of the intellect, to be forever roughly awakened by the blows of fate. Now I have found my way back to life.

Our existence has its abode in the cosmos, that it may diffuse volition in concrete form. It is a cumulative manifestation of the will. And its function is to overcome and sublimate the all too earthly element, the evil, or (so to speak) obstructive, side of the dualistic order of things. Every evil is matter which the will must set itself to sublimate. That I am situated here below amid evil, error, and pain makes the meaning and function of my existence doubly clear to me. That function is to grow by overcoming. With the probability of my condemnation, which even the Amir's favour could only transform into a long period of captivity, I reckon no less than before; but I feel now that the will can rise to the height of its heightened suffering. After all, no great pain is without its challenge to us, for the indomitable will can diminish it. Do not all the distresses which drove me in youth to sheer despair, seem to-day as nothing? Do we not smile at the things which made us cry when we were children? Our will has learnt to transcend its earlier tasks. Suffering, then,